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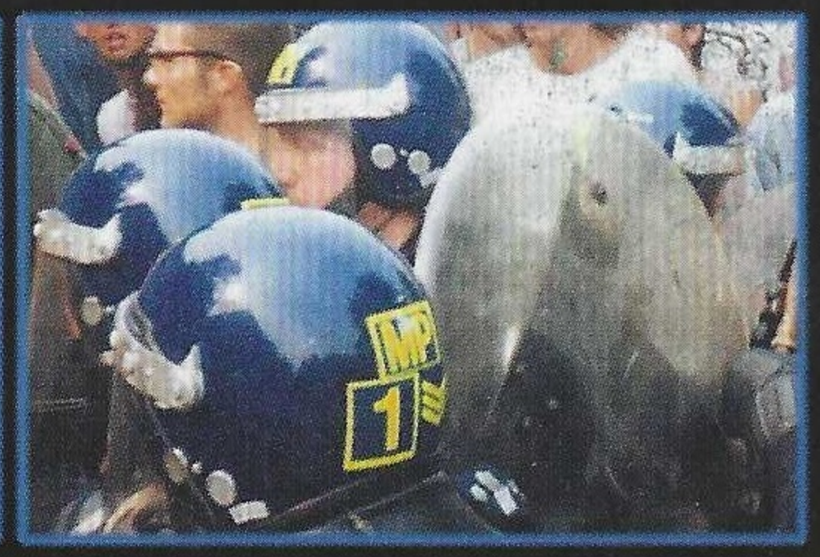
ELECTRONIC MUSIC + WIRED CULTURE



VERSION 2.0 FREE

OLIVER HO POLE JAMIE ANDERSON

JURYMAN THE ADVENT MICK HARRIS

INTEGRALE
MUZIQUE LIMITED

NEW AND FORTHCOMING RELEASES: MAY 2000

STEWART WALKER MEETS DAVE OLSON + SCOTT RADKE - DESCENDING TO ZERO (HI PASS)
RED SEAL - REMIX EP BY MICHEAL FORSHAW, ADE FENTON + UMEK (RED SEAL)
PHUTURE 303 - SOULGERS OF TEKNO (CREATORS OF DEEPNESS)
PUBLIC INFORMATION FILM - HERE AND NOW (DOWNWARDS)
H VERSUS NUCCLE - RIOT TONE (BLACK AND WHITE)
FANON FLOWERS - EP (MECHANISM INDUSTRIES)
BOB BROWN - MOMENTUM (FRAMEWORK)
JAY DENHAM / D-KNOX - EP (SONIC MIND)
TANGTRON - STATE OF THE ART (CYTRAX)
USER - 008A DOUBLEPACK (USER)
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ABUSER - ABUSER 01 (ABUSER)
THE HACKER - EP (SATIVAE)

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EDITORIAL

VERSION 2.0: MAY 2000

>WELCOME TO OVERLOAD VERSION 2.0

SIT DOWN, RELAX AND EXPERIENCE THE WARM, DATA-RICH ENVIRONMENT OF OUR SECOND LOAD.

WE HOPE YOU ENJOY YOUR VISIT.

WE WELCOME YOUR SUBMISSIONS, NEWS AND FEEDBACK. BETTER INPUT MEANS BETTER OUTPUT.

>END MESSAGE

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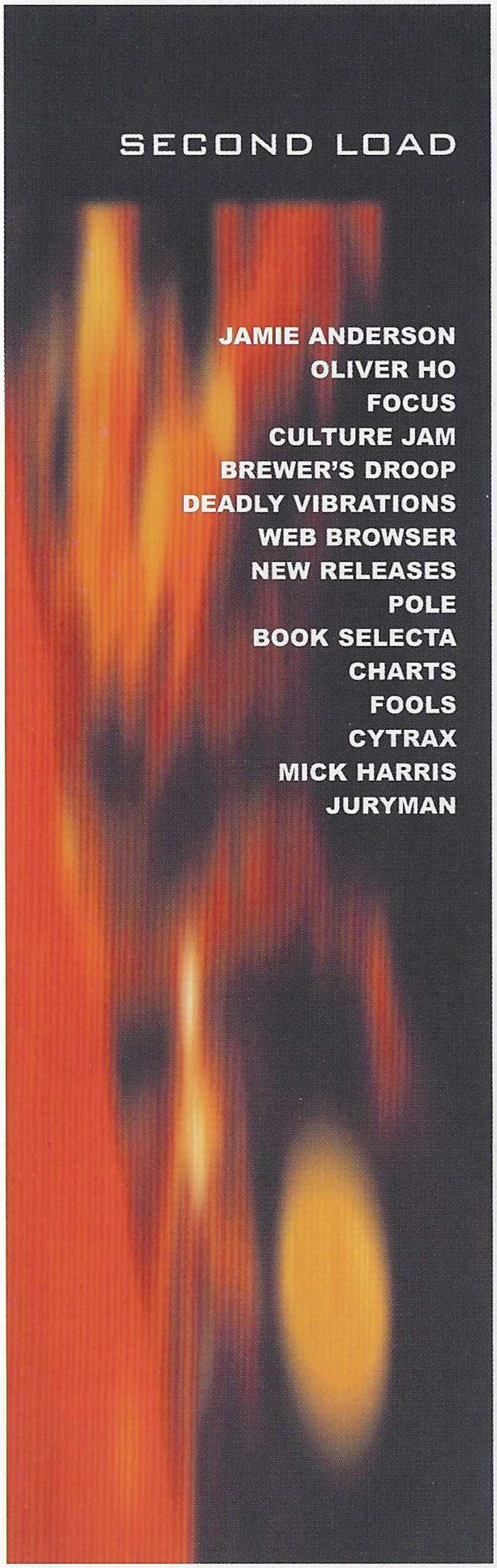

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09 JUNE 2000

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With releases on prestigious labels such as Rotation, Slam Dunk and Fierce, Bristol's JAMIE ANDERSON is studiously bridging the genre divide between jazz-tinged house and driving dancefloor techno. As his own Artform imprint pushes into double figures, THERESA GREEN journey's west in search of the man behind Bristol's hybrid house-o-matics.

WORDS> THERESA GREEN
PHOTO> ALEX WARMAN

MODERN ART MOVEMENT

In an industry that revolves around the incessant pigeonholing of artists, Westcountry wonderboy Jamie Anderson has long been adorned with the ambiguous tech-house tag that often attaches itself to the grey area between loungin' it and avin' it. "Everyone likes to say 'this person is this' and so on," says Jamie. "For me that's difficult, because I'll write something that DiY would play in a deep house set, and then something that you'd hear Cari Lekebusch play. Call it what you like, I just call it Artform."

The 25-year old ex-Londoner has settled into a comfortable working routine since moving to Bristol ten years ago. His approach to music production owes a great deal to his musical background, having been taught the basics of many different instruments by jazz players over the years. "You learn loads playing with a real drummer, a real vocalist, a real bass player, etc." Jamie elucidates. "You learn a lot about structure, and the way different instruments are played. A bass line that I come up with on a keyboard just sounds nothing like what a real bass player who'd trained all his life would come up with."

Having dabbled with the drums, trumpet and cello, he finally settled on playing keys - a role regularly fulfilled in a funk band up until just a couple of years ago. Yet despite his extensive experience of traditional instrumentation, Jamie's penchant for electronic music stretches right back to his childhood. Whilst everyone else at his school was listening to Duran Duran and the like, Jamie would be down at the local vinyl emporium, hassling his dad for the latest Grandmaster Flash tune. "I wanted a sampler ever since I heard 'N-n-n-n-nineteen" he laughs.

Soon after relocating in Bristol, Jamie became involved with the local club circuit, DJing and joining forces with friends to promote regular techno / house events such as Club Destiny and Elements. He admits not paying too much attention to the Bristol club scene nowadays, instead choosing to concentrate on his one true passion, music-making. He's worked in his own studio since his sixth Artform release; "That's when my music started to become fine-tuned - when I could have my equipment set up exactly how I wanted it to sound. I try to keep the music 'toned down' on Artform - organic, jazzy and funky - kind of house-based but with techno production to it. For other projects, like the stuff done on Rotation and the Swedish labels, I go for something more up-front and straight for the dancefloor."

Enthused by Jamie's material, Rotation boss Dave Angel called him up shortly after the first Artform release. "Dave did a remix for me" he explains. "We became friends - because he's only just down the road we hang out, discuss technical things, play computer games..." Rotation now handle his DJ bookings also, resulting in an increasingly hectic global schedule. "They want to get me around the whole world, which is fine! My bookings seem to come in lumps, which is okay as I've a backlog of stuff in the studio to finish." He points over at an ominous shelf full of 'work-in-progress' DATs in the corner. "I always have to crack on with my music. If I leave it for a day there's something wrong - it's that craving for the 909 again. When I've been away playing, after sitting on an eight-hour flight you wish you'd spent the weekend in the studio instead, but playing to a crowd in another country does also give you inspiration. If I've been in the studio for a month without playing out, my music becomes mellow and 'Bristol-ified'."

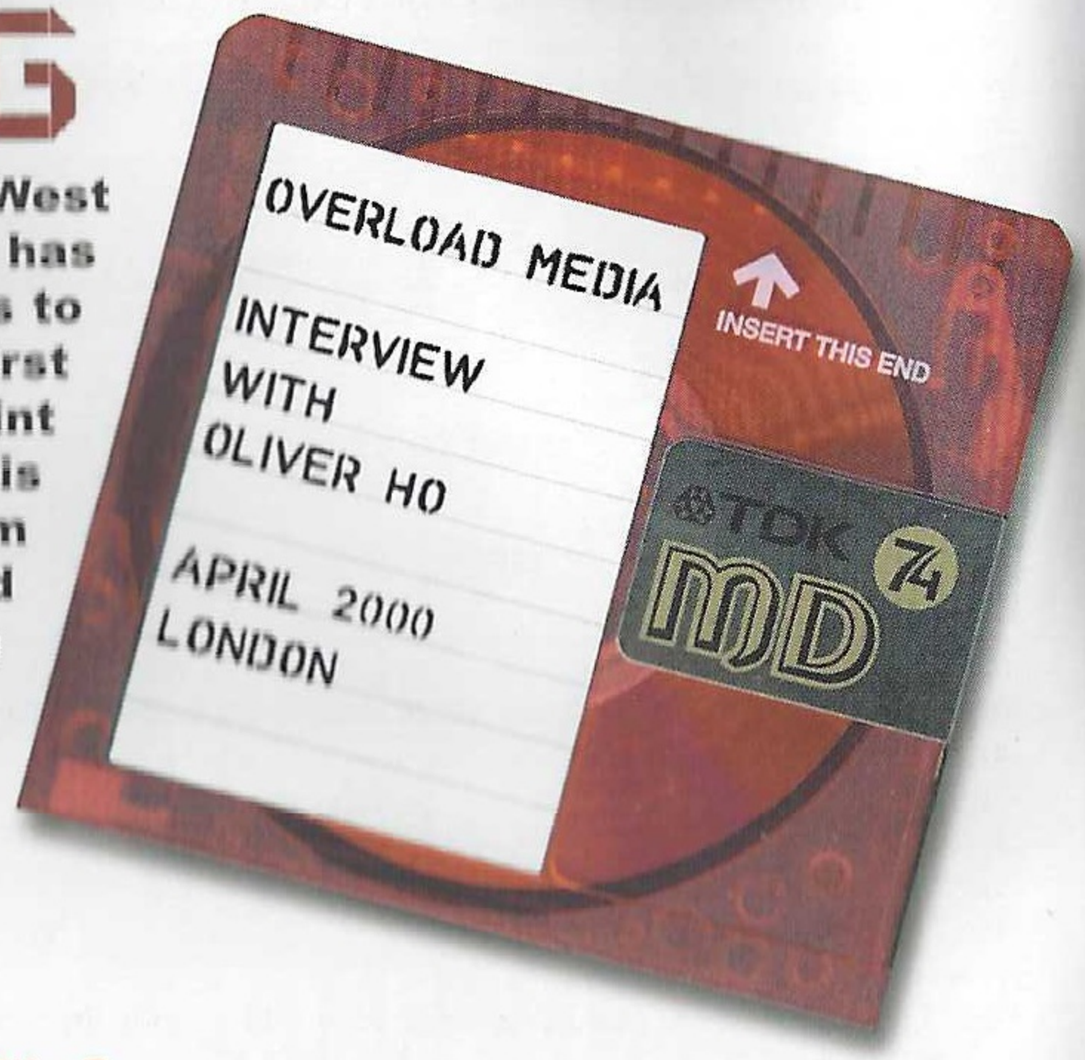
Having received no response from the few tapes he originally sent out, Jamie, like many other independent artists, decided the best way to present his music was via his own record label. "I thought 'This could go on forever'. Until you have a name for yourself, no one really wants to hear your music. It took the first couple of releases before people really started phoning up. I'm glad I've got my own label. You feel in control, and even if you sell half the amount of records you would on another label, you still make the same amount of money, and you still own the music. If you give it to a label and the project doesn't do very well, not many people are going to hear it, and that's the last thing that's going to happen to it."

So, did he find it easy to settle on the name Artform? "It's kind of difficult coming up with a name for a label that you think you can stick to. One word or one phrase has got to say a lot about the whole musical direction and where you think it's going to be in five years time. The way I approach writing music and the way I want the label to go is to be artistic-led rather than 'craze'-led - not led by the fact that something's 'big' at the moment. It's about treating dance music as an art form. I've got my sketchpad here, and I'm going to paint some pictures."

With enough material stockpiled for three albums, and releases planned through numerous reputable label projects, Jamie's notoriety looks set to rise considerably. As one would expect, this is a man who seems most at ease with his vocation. "I sit in this little room, join some notes together, sequence them and record them down to DAT - the next thing you know, you're half way around the world having a party. It's kind of like the perfect job."

Latinism Phase Three is out now on Artform. Forthcoming releases from Jamie Anderson include a remix of The Hacker on Rotation, plus tracks for Brenda Russell's new label, California's Immigrant imprint, DiY and another EP on Rotation.

FEELING EALING



Emerging like enigmatic turbulence from the leafy West London suburbs of Ealing, the music of OLIVER HO has evolved to become one of the most influential forces to shape the modern face of electronic music. His first releases on much celebrated techno labels Blueprint and Surface met with widespread acclaim, whilst his inventive DJing style has provided a global platform from which to showcase his futuristic textured sound. With incessant remix requests, a forthcoming album on Meta and an exciting new project bridging the chasm between audio and visual arts, it seems that Oliver Ho now holds the ears of the world at ransom. As he packs his bags for a lengthy tour of Australia, ALEX WARD digs deep down into the multidimensional mind of Ealing's most wanted.

MINIDISC <RECORDING>

TRACK 1

Is it true that you first meet your Ealing sound associate Max Duley at a Napalm Death gig?

Yes. That was the kind of music that brought us all together - really hard chaotic death metal, and punk. I suppose the first electronic element of that was Godflesh, they were the first electronic influences we had, then we got into the Aphex Twin. I think that's a very British way of getting into electronic music, as opposed to the Detroit thing where it's sort of hip hop, electro, funk and stuff. We were on the wierder side of things.

So you never approached electronic music from the early days of rave...?

No, I used to hate dance music. I still hate most of dance music. It wasn't really the dance aspect that got us interested anyway - it was the attitude behind the music that got us into electronic material, and then the body followed I guess [laughs].

So you've never been one for harping on about old-skool house tracks...?

No, never. 'Strings of Life' was never an important track for me. All of those supposed classics... I think history has been written and people assume that's the way it is. History is a personal thing - it's not something that can be imposed in some way.

What were your other early influences apart from Godflesh? You mentioned Drummers of Burundi...

Yeah, I think Kodo more than Drummers of Burundi. I've seen them about six times. I'll never forget the first time I saw them - it was absolutely amazing. You could really feel an energy coming from the stage, and you could feel they'd put one hundred percent into their music. It was the same sort of electricity that Napalm Death had, but it was just in a different form. For me there's no difference between Napalm Death, Kodo, Jeff Mills or Coil - it's just the vehicle they use to get their ideas across. The intention behind it is the same.

TRACK 2

You've been living in London all your life. How has this affected your music?

London is such a good place for experiencing different cultures - it's the best place to live in England, and the variety of mediums you can experience is amazing as well. You've got galleries, you can go and see classical music, electronic music, funk - anything you want, so in that way it's really good. One time I'll go to Lost, then I'll go to the Royal Festival Hall, and then a jazz club or something. It's an incredible melting pot of different things.

Are you into much jazz then?

Miles Davies - I've been getting so into him recently. He's been a real influence on the album I've done for Meta, especially 'Bitches Brew' - that was amazing, it doesn't sound dated at all. It was released at a time when Miles Davies was known for doing quite straight jazz, then he released this album called Bitches Brew which was a totally dark fusion - the first real fusion album. People were going 'this isn't jazz / we don't know what this is / we don't know how to relate to this' - in the same kind of way that new music now is accepted. It's an inspiration to try and do something like that.

TRACK 3

You've used vocal samples extensively in your Meta material, unlike the Blueprint / Surface releases...

I had been making music which was right for Blueprint, and music which was right for Surface. Then I had this other kind of music that didn't seem right for either of those labels, and so I needed to have an outlet for that, and that was Meta.

What projects will follow the release of your Meta album?

I'm doing a compilation album, and this compilation will be part one of a project I'm starting called 'Exit'. The concept of Exit is to draw different art forms together. Each release will try to embrace a different medium, so the first couple of releases will be sound, there will be a film, and at some point there will be a book. Then there will also be individual events showcasing different artists, and hopefully at some point there's going to be an online gallery. The first release is going to be a compilation of really experimental soundworks done by artists such as James Ruskin, Karl O'Connor [Regis], Tony Child [Surgeon], Max [Duley], Mick Harris and Steve Bicknell. It's showing people that we've got more than one dimension to our creativity. Everyone thinks we are just about loops and looped techno, and we're not. The second Exit release will be a 74-minute continuous ambient track by Tommy Gillard [also from Ealing]. This is good because the first release will get people's interest, and then I can put something out by someone who no one knows. We're about more than one idea, and Exit will try to redress the balance between club music and listening music.

So, is your Light and Dark imprint also trying to redress the balance?

Yes. Light and Dark is more based around sound than rhythm. It's the go-between between Meta and Exit. I see Light and Dark as the thing in the middle - the stepping stone between club or rhythm music and formless music. They're club tracks that deconstruct themselves and end up being ambient tracks. The next one is going to have Mick Harris deconstructing some of my tracks.

So, was Mick Harris the drummer when you met Max at that Napalm Death gig?

Yeah, it's amazing - it's come full circle. When I was sixteen I used to go and see him play with Napalm Death, and now... It's almost like we've all gone on the same journey independently of each other.

Did you enjoy doing the EP for Steve Bicknell's Lost offshoot label, Cosmic ID?

Yes, that's a full circle thing as well. The cycle being completed, because we went to Lost and were inspired by Lost, and now our music is played at Lost, being released by the people that run Lost. We can give something back, and become people involved with presenting new ideas.

TRACK 4

The current state of techno...

I think it's in a really, really good state. If you ask most people, they generally moan about it. I think it's in the healthiest state it's ever been in, because now, more than ever, there's more bad music being made, but at the same time there's even more good music being

made. You need bad music to be made because you need that sort of impetus to get new ideas and try and progress. I also think it's healthy in the way that the scene refers to itself - like the User stuff and Utility Plastics. I like the way that they are self-referential - records sampling records that might be sampling records. It's an ongoing process, a sort of mutating process as well. It's like manipulating something so heavily that the thing you started off with has changed so much it just doesn't have any relation to what you get at the end - the outcome. And that's really good.

You once spoke of music being a metaphor for a thought so abstract that you can't use words. Would you apply this philosophy to all forms of music?

Yes.

Even chart fodder that has been packaged to get to number one?

Yes. A metaphor doesn't necessarily have to be a wholesome thing. In those cases it would be a metaphor for a lifestyle, an image that you are buying into. If you buy a Britney Spears CD, the music is a metaphor for a certain age group aspiring to be something, like a fourteen year-old cheerleader or something. I suppose it's not particularly abstract [laughs].

Do you think that non-dancefloor orientated techno is generally misunderstood?

Yes. The thing about bass drums and hi-hats is that they provide a framework, and when you take that framework away people find it hard to understand what's going on. It's like a sort of context. One of the really good things about techno is that it's often set in this recognisable context. You can serve up something very, very strange and get people to consume quite abstract ideas but not really realise it because there's a familiar packaging of bass drum and hi-hat. It's like having a canvas. The bass drum and the hi-hats provide a foundation, and you can put anything you want over that. Take that away and people don't really know how to consume it - I don't mean consumption in a commercial sort of way.

TRACK 5

You've been DJing extensively with three decks and a drum machine. Is it quite an important progression from just two decks and a mixer?

Totally, but it's not really a new thing.

Not many people seem to do it though...

...Which is surprising. It's important to try new things, have more spontaneity, and have something that's more unique. You can only be so unique playing records, but if you have your own sounds and sequences that you've programmed it's much more than that. On the night, that's perhaps the only time you're going to hear those tracks. It's so important to be unique, because there's so many techno DJs that play minimal funky techno at the moment.

Have you ever thought of doing a full-on live performance?

I've done that once in Spain. That was good - I would do it again, but it would have to be special circumstances. I'd have to know the club, know the sound inside the club, and know the vibe as well for it to work.

Did it work in Spain?

Yeah, it did work very well. It's a hassle though, and that's one of the other reasons I don't do live sets - it's just the logistics of it. Also people expect to hear tracks that they recognise, and it's boring to do that. With some live sets it's like they've got all of the sequences already there and they just press start. I think if I did a live set now I would involve musicians as well - percussionists. I've used a percussionist on the album, and I played with a percussionist in Ireland about three months ago. That was excellent. It loses that sort of coldness and becomes more organic.

TRACK 6

You've done a lot of remixes - is that something you enjoy doing?

Yes. I don't ever intend to do so many, but someone will ask me and I'll like the idea of it and do it. Also it's an opportunity to do a track that maybe wouldn't be right for any of the labels I record for. It's an opportunity to do an individual event - a self-contained track. I was talking to Tony Surgeon about it. He described it as the one-night stand of music. You just do it once, and that's it [laughs].

You've rarely been remixed yourself though...

No. Damon Wild has done the one ever remix.

You seem to give support to a lot of new labels, i.e. Delay, Sequential, etc. Are you approached much for material?

Yes I am, but I do turn a lot of stuff down. When something feels right then I'll do it.

TRACK 7

You've been very prolific in terms of production. Are you pleased with everything that's been released?

I wouldn't have it any other way, but at the same time not every release works. I think in the last year the releases have been working, but I'd say the first five Meta releases were experiments - I don't mean in the way that they sound experimental, but rather they represent me trying to find what Meta was about. It was only on the sixth or seventh release that everything started congealing. I think you can see in the first five releases that I'm looking for something. Every release is like road-testing an idea. This album represents everything I've done for the first ten releases. It represents all the ideas in that consolidated.

Out of your many releases, do you have any that stand out as being 'favourites'?

My second release, Surface number one, that's the one I'm most proud of. Well - not proud of, it just works and it's always worked for me. It still sounds fresh. That and Meta 8, because for me everything just clicked on that release as well. It's hard to single out any one release, because they're all links in a chain, and each is as important as the other. You can't take one out - the chain is the important thing, not the individual links.

A lot of DJs played Meta 8 who wouldn't normally play your material...

I went through a year of experimenting lots, and a lot of the times it didn't quite work, but for me that's good. It's interesting to hear records where someone's experimenting with a new idea and you can see them finding their way. You'll know that within two releases time, it will have clicked. It's like hearing Jeff Mills' last two or three releases, you can tell he's sort of searching for a new sound, and the records he's been making haven't quite worked. But it's interesting to hear him looking for that sound, and you know that in maybe three releases time it will have clicked and he will have found something new and it will work well. It's important to have releases that are slightly unsure of themselves.

Have you become very set into a way of working?

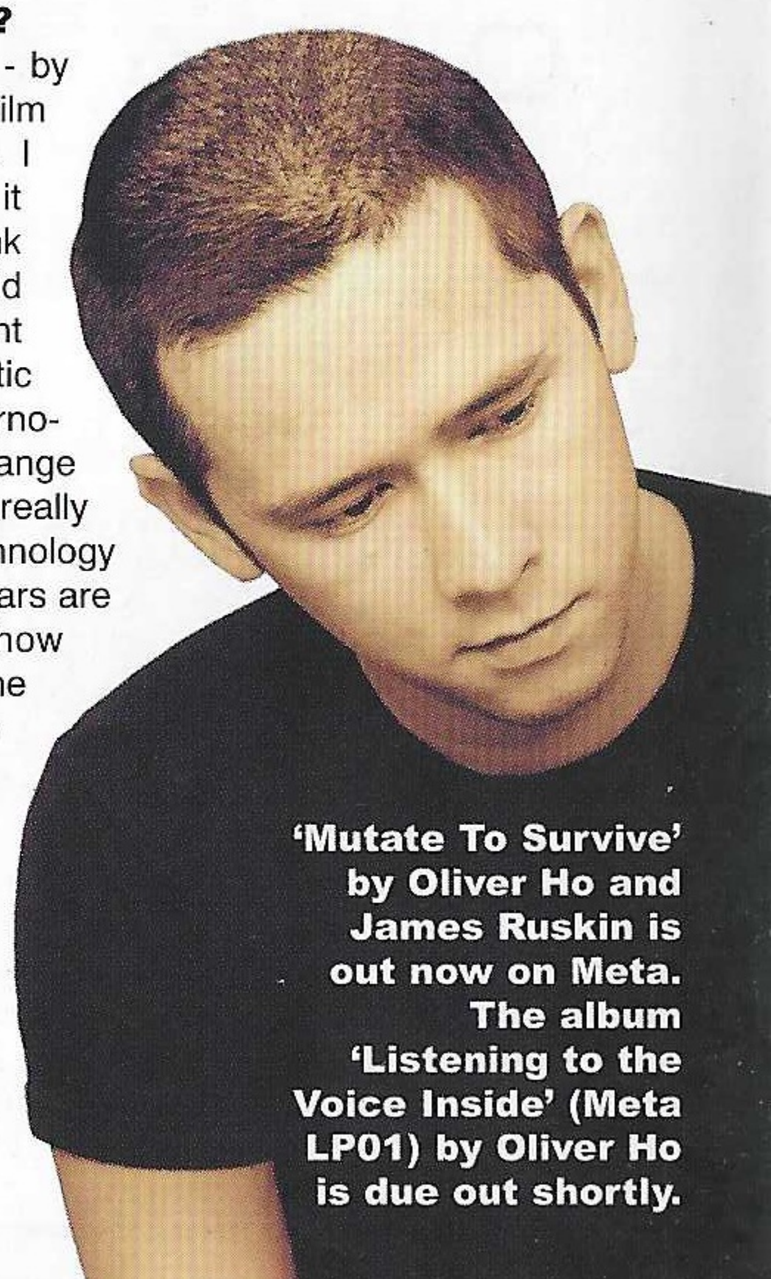
Yeah, I have - completely. The equipment you use is just a tool set, and should always be expendable. You should be ready to just destroy it all and get new stuff. You should never be too attached to your equipment.

If someone dropped a bomb on your studio, would your music be very different then?

I imagine it would, and it would probably be quite healthy for me to do that. It's easy to get locked into a way of making stuff, and you have to force yourself to change things around. That does happen slowly. It's important not to get too preoccupied with the technology of it - it's about loosing that emphasis. I'm all for using technology and combining it because it's the main tool that we have to express ourselves. In that way it's important, but in another way you should always remember that it's something that you use and it's something that is constantly changing as well. It's the ideas that you have that are important.

Finally, you mentioned releasing a book through your Exit project. Any works of literature you'd like to talk about?

My favourite book is 'Crash' - by JG Ballard. I thought the film was translated interestingly. I didn't think it was amazing - it was a bit detached, but I think that was on purpose. David Cronenbourg put a different spin on it - it was less erotic than the book, far less pornographic as well. It's a strange book, but something that just really caught me. It's about technology basically - the sex and the cars are a sort of metaphor for how humans use technology in the pursuit of basic desires. It's why computer games are so important, it's why techno is so important. Pornography owes everything it is to technology - from the invention of the printing press through to video. Technology is in every crevice of human experience.



'Mutate To Survive' by Oliver Ho and James Ruskin is out now on Meta. The album 'Listening to the Voice Inside' (Meta LP01) by Oliver Ho is due out shortly.

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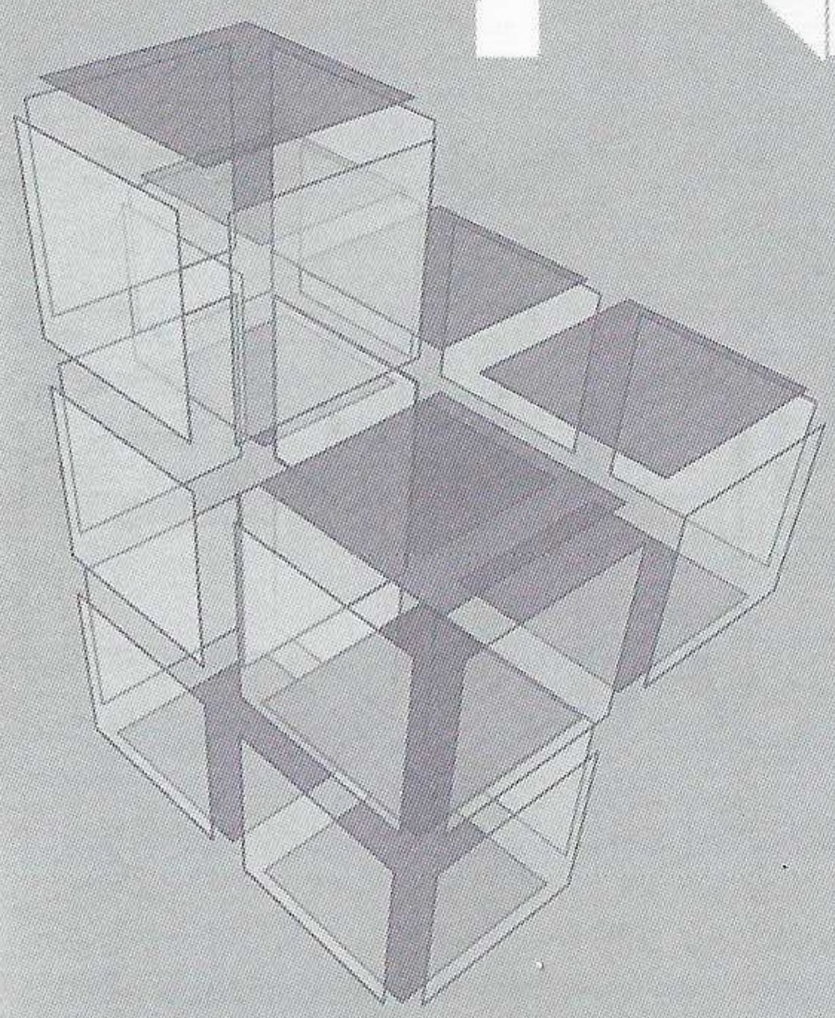


Clear was one of the most widely respected imprints for forward-thinking electro-funk and emotive electronica of the mid to late nineties, releasing records by Plaid, Jedi Knights, Dr. Rockit, Metamatics and Morgan Geist amongst many others. Then silence.

Two years on and Clair 'Clear' Poulton has set up Focus for 'beautiful Detroit influenced-electronica'. "This is the first time that the whole A & R of the label has been totally my personal taste in music," she writes via email. "I know that sounds self-indulgent, but I believe that I can only expect people to buy the records that I myself would buy." She elaborates further on her listening habits: "I obviously have the Black Dog, Plaid, B12, Likemind, Reload, Stasis thing going on, but also old house and garage and early Detroit techno like Carl Craig and Model 500." She also mentions hip hop, classical and Jeff Mills. The label's agenda simply reflects her passion for meticulous and melodic electronics.

"There has been a lack in good old fashioned beautiful music in the past few years, as people are going more and more up their IDM (intelligent dance music) arses! Music isn't meant to be clever it's meant to make you feel something and that's what I hope Focus will do." Focus is inevitably attracting interest due to the Clear connection, yet Clair admits that she doesn't really feel there is a tangible link because "Clear was a different story." Clear was often a platform for established artists to experiment with their music under new pseudonyms. Many have gone on to become household names. Focus, by contrast, "has started the other way round, working with new artists, mainly because the old ones aren't doing anything good." She sees the label "carrying on from where Likemind left off," the seminal electronica label that released truly timeless music by Red Cell, Stasis and Neuron.

Future:
Focus will have releases by B12 and Stasis by the end of the year. Sadly, The Stasis project will be Steve Patton's last ever electronic project, having made headway with the bare bones of hip hop.

Present:
Focus have releases by two new artists, Plus One and Lackluster. The label's first album release is by 21 year old Esa Ruoho [aka Lackluster] from Finland. I met Esa at The Pool, a stylish bar in Shoreditch where Focus will soon start their weekly sessions.

Unlike the extroverted rock star attitude of fellow Fin Jimi Tenor, Esa begrudges having press shots taken and doesn't want to be interviewed because 'everything has been said by someone else'. "I don't need to voice my opinion about my own tracks" he tells me. What do you listen to then? "The usual. It would be easier if you took a photo of my CD collection." Esa wasn't being deliberately difficult. He has recently gone from being another anonymous net-musician, to acquiring an album deal and being bigged-up by Andrew Weatherall and Laurent Garnier. He honestly cannot understand what all the fuss is about. He even felt it necessary to date every track on the album because he feels he can do better. The entire album was constructed on Fast Tracker, a basic sampler-based software sequencer, and he has only just been able to afford his first keyboard.

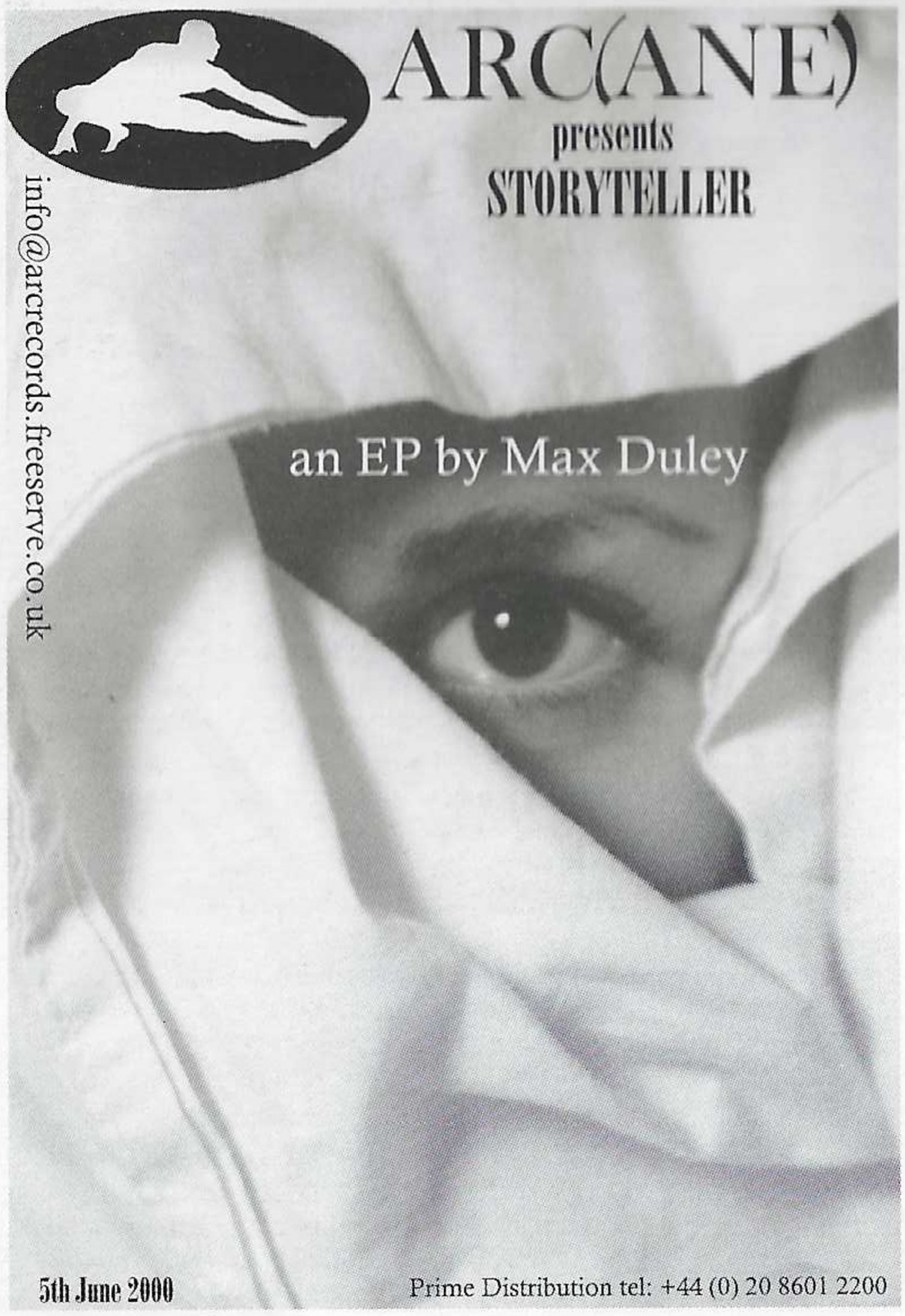
Like most people making music for personal satisfaction with no regard for commercial constraints, 'don't give up your day job' is part and parcel. However, unlike most, if Esa quit the 9-to-5 he'd find himself behind bars. He is currently working for Finland's Civil Service as an alternative to military conscription. "I have the option of going to jail if I quit the civil service. If I had a laptop I could go there and just do tracks." It wasn't lost in the translation. Would you consider doing that? "I don't have money for a laptop, but I could do that. It would be interesting." Much of his album material was written on his computer at work. What is it like living the seemingly eternal darkness of winter in Finland with sometimes just one hour a day? "I'm not the best person to describe it. Its just depressing." What is the demo scene like? "Its been going for fifteen years, just a bunch of people doing music videos and tracks, just trying to get the most out of their machines." That's definitely what you do. "No. I haven't been trying" he replies with unrealised modesty. He describes his music as melancholic, and I ask whether he feels National Service and the seemingly perpetual darkness of winter influence his sound? "I don't think about it. Whatever comes, comes..." A recurring theme of our conversation centres around the nature of music reviews. The Lackluster sound has been likened to Boards of Canada and "the ambient side of Autechre" to Esa's irritation. "I don't know why it is required to compare things, I've been compared to Skam stuff, Autechre. You don't have to describe a track you should just listen to it."

For five years he made tracks for himself, putting the results on a series of web sites. This is how Clair came across his music. He now feels like the pressures on. He has made the recent transition from isolated obscurity, thinking about nothing other than channelling "whatever comes," and now finds himself thinking about "the whole record label thing."

"I don't want to get addicted to people's comments about my music. I shouldn't really care what other people think. I'm closing myself away because I don't want to have it affect me. I would really like to have the capability of programming myself to think about specific things and block other things out. I'm doing an automatic job of blocking every decent review out. I think they don't know what they're talking about, but it is really difficult when people like Andrew Weatherall likes my music. The only reaction I can give is that the whole world has gone mad. If people paid less attention to subjective criticism there would be a greater range of interesting, expressive and honest music to listen to."

He leaves me with a lasting image: "I was looking at this comic book, the Beginners Guide to Zen: It showed a guy playing an eastern instrument and this other guy said 'Okay, I've listened to it but what's the meaning?' So he played the track again."

'CONTAINER' by Lackluster is out now on Focus



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SUBWAY RECORDS

Bristol BS1

techno, tech house
house, nrg- acid trance
drum & bass, hardcore

74 Stokes Croft, 0117 903058

Bath BA1

hip hop, drum & bass
garage, house
tec house, techno
hard house, nrg
acid trance

72 Walcot st, 01225 425376

vinyl, clothing,
kit, boxes & bags
head & hemp products

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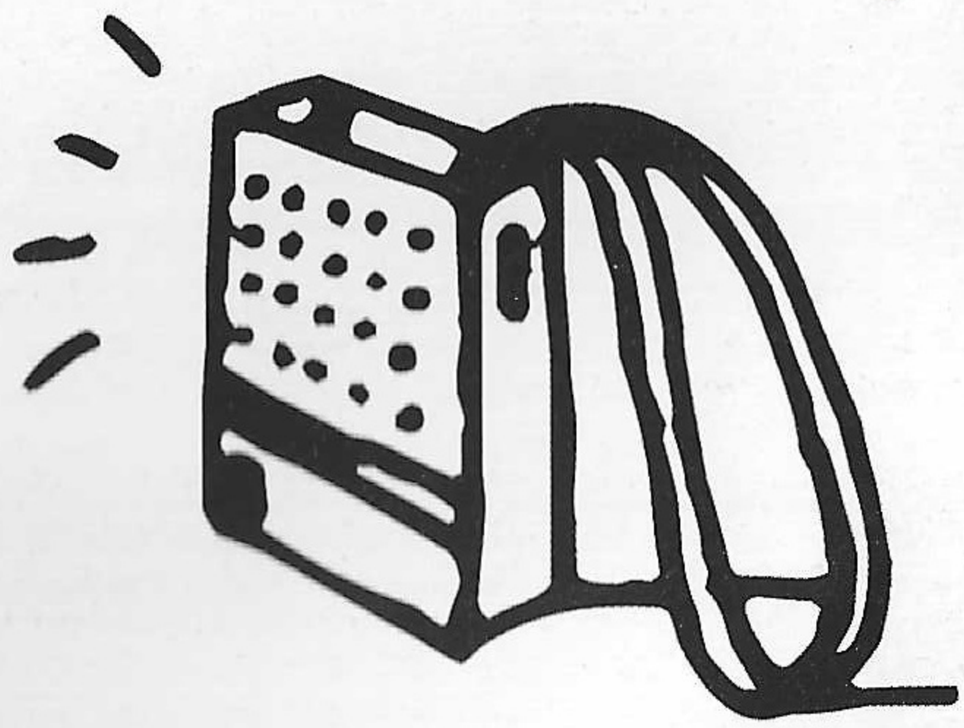


www.worminterface.com

ESCAPE

CULTURE JAM

WORDS> MATT HENRY

IMAGE USED WITHOUT THE PERMISSION OF THE ADBUSTERS MEDIA FOUNDATION

'We call ourselves culture jammers... the advance shock troops of the most significant social movement of the next twenty years.' A brave statement you may think. For who in the Western world could make such a claim when 'movements' and 'revolutions' are just sooo last century? Apathy is the new black and submission the accessory no boy or girl can ever leave home without. Even the believers don't really believe. Hell, you can even buy pre-packaged rebellion that lasts right up until you're 22.

Yet this statement came not from an embittered old communist high on floor-polish but a sincere and largely sane, middle-aged Canadian who means business. Kalle Lasn is universally acknowledged as a leading spokesman for the ever-growing North American 'culture jamming' movement and the founder of Canadian Culture Jam magazine Adbusters. He predicts the movement will be what civil rights was to the 60's, what feminism was to the 70's and what environmental activism has been to the 80's and 90's. And, he doesn't seem to want for much: 'to topple the existing power structures and forge major adjustments to the way we will live in the twenty-first century.' Heard it all before? Well maybe, but the culture jammers know more tricks than a monkey...

'Real change can now come only from a change in culture, and a change in culture can come only from 'uncooling' Western icons'

The term 'culture jamming' was first used by the San Francisco audio-collage band Negativland on their 80's release 'Jamcon '84' as a tribute to ham radio 'jammers' who clogged the airwaves with Mickey Mouse impersonations and other pop culture 'noise.' The term was then employed by cultural critic, Mark Dery, in the New York Times to describe pranksters and piss-takers who wanted more out of life than impressing their mates at CB club with fart noises. Here were characters with far grander designs - genuine, no-frills, root-and-branch cultural revolution. And so were born the 'culture jammers': information/artistic terrorists with an impulse dating back to the Beatniks, early punk-rockers, hippies, Situationists, Surrealists, Dadaists, anarchists and anyone else who was up for a bit of artistic social-aggro.

While everyone else in America was propped up on their swelling arses to find out if Ross bangs Rachel, early culture jammers were out tagging walls, liberating billboards, operating pirate radio stations, rearranging products on market shelves, hacking into corporate and government computers and pulling off daring media pranks and hoaxes. All that and still home in time for tea. And their target - America ™ - a nation no longer anything but a brand, with a culture created not by its people but churned out by advertising and media fat cats, and with a populace whose very souls have been whittled away with corporate control. No longer citizens but consumers, these poor yanks became slaves to the cult of consumption with one single demand - surrender spontaneity and follow its programme - sleep, eat, sit in car, work, shop, watch TV, sleep again. A designer life based on a bottomless shit-pit of expansion that planet earth can't sustain and a life of 'cool' globally imposed upon nations that really don't know any better.

Right-on, I hear you cry, but what's new about consumer/capitalist/corporate/cultural imperialist critique? Well nothing except that the Culture Jam movement has a whole new method of attack. Where generations of intellectuals and revolutionaries have assumed that change will come if only we can get the 'truth' to people - from the grassroots or from seizure of higher echelons of the media - the Culture Jammers have come to realise this is simply not enough. Choices are made according to a much wider cultural spectrum; a spectrum long influenced by a complex web of symbols, signs, sounds and images shat out from what we call 'The Media.' Increasing regulation or freeing up the market - the traditional choices of right and left - are no longer appropriate to change the world we live in. Real change can now come only from a change in culture, and a change in culture can come only from 'uncooling' Western icons and the symbols that are rotting our nations to the core.

'A designer life based on a bottomless shit-pit of expansion that planet earth can't sustain...'

Culture Jamming then, is simply the viral introduction of radical ideas using the establishment's own techniques. 'Uncooling' or 'demarketing' are nice buzzwords for taking the piss. Be it 'skulling' a Pepsi billboard, designing a spoof website for Shell, conducting an Adbusters-style TV marketing campaign or organising global events like 'Buy Nothing Day,' the objectives are all the same- free up our culture by causing damage to blind belief in commercial propaganda. The success of Kalle Lasn's own 'Media Foundation' (made up of campaign mag Adbusters and the Culture Jammers network) in North America can be measured by growing corporate worry - Adbusters is now required reading for advertising exec's all over the US. Yet Kalle Lasn is right in pointing to the movements greatest obstacle -. All the big TV stations bar CNN are refusing to air his 'subverts.' The next stage must be the stimulation of argument about democracy - how can we be living in a democratic world when the greatest vehicle for democratic debate, Television, is not open to the public, even when they're willing to pay. Once this last sacred cow is slaughtered the time will have come once again to...tune in, turn on and drop out.

Calvin Klien

BREWER'S DROOP

WORDS> ED TWIST

The UK's once anarchic festival circuit is now dominated by brewery conglomerates and big business. Dance music is the soundtrack to predictable events that are little more than a chance for the clubbed-to-death generation to get some fresh air. Same regulations, same security, same feeling of being ripped off at every turn. Same audio mediocrity as the so-called superclubs. "Are fields the new clubs ?" asked a Mixmag frontpage a few years back. Tribal Gathering claimed their post-CJA events occurred "in the face of ever more desperate establishment efforts to stamp out our basic freedoms to gather and party." To imply that multi-million pound companies were in any way hindered by the Criminal Justice Act takes the (disco) biscuit. When the UK's underground sound systems were getting organised, Fighting For The Right To Party and raising awareness about the CJA's infringement on civil liberties, Tribal Gathering's Universe / Mean Fiddler partnership were busy preparing for their next event, scheduled to take place six months after the CJA became law...

The empty rhetoric of fake rebellion shifts tickets, records, haircuts. The music industry is a factory that makes counterfeit goods, re-packaging subversion and selling it back. There's nothing quite like rebelling against society for the weekend. Look at Glastonbury. The commercialisation and enclosure of a gathering that started life as a counter-cultural free festival alternative to the mainstream. I still find it ironic that people continue to scale the fence, when so much more fun is to be found at the free sound system parties beyond the perimeter. Last year's festival guide compares the Glastonbury experience to "the utopian dreams of William Blake, (it) exists outside the mundane realities of out of town shopping centres ... appealing to that side of the British Psyche that always hated cities and dreamed of building Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land." Whoever penned that peculiar piece of propaganda must have been looking through psychedelic windowpanes. Glastonbury mutated long ago. Far from being a back-to-nature escape from society and away from 'out of town shopping centres', the festival has become an outdoor shopping centre in itself, with hundreds of shops, cash points, security guards, muzak. Or maybe more like a city: complete with its own radio station, mobile communication network (to the highest bidder) and police force.

I used to love going to Glastonbury. I was one of the year-in / year-outers, a die-hard fan who knew which bands were playing when, and every shortcut through the tents. Always refused to buy a T-shirt though. Anyway, one needs look no further than The Green Field to see how the festival has changed. A supposed site of peace and tranquillity where there is no music, no market stalls, no camping. A chance to get away from the hassle and bustle of mini-Babylon. The imposing watchtowers and the sight and sound of two police motor bikes patrolling between the outer and inner fence obliterated the ambience. Penned in and monitored.

If you found the Glastonbury brochure blurb amusing you won't be surprised to learn the Americans do it better. Whilst Glastonbury's brochure quotes William Blake, The Burning Man marketing cites contemporary cult anarchist philosopher Hakim Bey and compares their commercial event, long since severed from it's original counter-cultural impetus, to Bey's concept of a temporary autonomous zone. On the recent TV documentary devoted to the event, Larry Harvey, Burning Man's Mr.Big, informs the viewers that there are "no spectators" and that "there are no rules." A ranger cruises past in the background... "This is all about participation" he tells the Guardian. "This is not a show it's a little world" - complete with carefully planned parking that accommodates the increasing numbers of private aircraft. One need only compare the carefully organised parking facilities for luxury campers and light aircraft to the sprawled chaos of battered buses at spontaneous free festivals like Castlemorton and Euro Teknivals to understand the difference between participation and consumption, the difference between asserting control over time/space and buying permission from companies and authorities. One should not be surprised at the lengths companies go to to associate themselves with subversion, it's taken at face value and sold in the supermarket of style.

However, when political lobbying and the passing of legislation enters the equation things take on a sinister new twist. The criminalisation of 'repetitive beats' and 'raves' (Criminal Justice Act 1994) played UK dance culture, with a nod and a wink, into the hands of commercially motivated promoters and breweries with profound effects. It used to be impossible to get alcohol at free festivals, and the well-documented origins of dance culture had little interest in the buzz-diluting and dehydrating effects of alcohol. From "accciiieeed ! ! !" to "lager, lager, lager" in less than a decade. The profits from the sale of alcohol command significant political lobbying power. Evidence suggests that, since the late eighties, such power has been regularly employed in a marketing battle between the alcohol industry and rave culture - a war against non-profit making drugs, dating back to a time when the concept of taxation began. So, when market analyst reports first identified the increasing popularity of rave culture and Ecstasy use with a reduction in alcohol sales, the drinks industry got a strategy down its neck.

In 1989, a significant acidic date in the history of house, a new PR alliance was formed by Whitbread, Bass, Seagram and other leading alcoholic companies. Established at the headquarters of Guinness plc, their publicly stated aim: "to promote sensible drinking." Take a look around: the cultural landscape is littered with pre-club bars ('the new clubs' blurted a number of Specialist Dance glossies); alcohol sponsored clubs, festivals and record label tours are commonplace; advertising campaigns that associate alcohol with the imagery, assumptions and soundtracks of dance culture have infiltrated the mainstream. The once deviant beast of dance music has been

well and truly tamed. How long before a dance glossy shows a photograph of a stylised bottle of alcoholic / energy drink on the front cover. The drink that saved clubland! Are pubs the new clubs?.

A dance culture that conjures concepts such as empathy and community has been contaminated. I am not biased. I love drinking in pubs. Usually I cannot go without my daily fix of Guinness followed by a couple of Stellas. But I would rather be surrounded by people who are 'loved up' than people who are getting equally as out of it on drink. If you catch the eye of the former you may get a smile or paranoid glance back, depends on the social setting. At best it may be a hug, at worst a sweaty handshake and your ear chewed off. Catch the eye of the latter and you may get your head kicked in. 'You looking at me? You looking at my bird?'

A report on Leisure Futures, published in 1993 by the Henley Centre, revealed that between 1987 and 1992, pub attendance in the UK fell by 11%, with a projected 20% decrease over the next five years. The report concluded: "This poses a significant threat to spending for licensed drinks retailers and drink companies. Firstly some young people are turning away from alcohol to other stimulants; secondly, raves displace much of the time and energy which might have been expended on other leisure activities like pubs or drinking at home."

Graham Bright's 'Acid House Bill', the CJA and the Public Entertainments (Drug Misuse) Bill were all legislative victories for the alcohol industry. When MP Barry Legg introduced the latter bill to parliament he noted: "there was a lot of money involved in the business." This bill would "squeeze every penny of profit from the drug dealers."

'When market analyst reports first identified the increasing popularity of rave culture and Ecstasy use with a reduction in alcohol sales, the drinks industry got a strategy down its neck.'

When last month's Police Foundation report (a landmark independent enquiry into drug use) recommended the liberalisation of Britain's drug laws it was immediately quashed by the Government. The Police Foundation report called for a reclassification of drugs such as Ecstasy, LSD and cannabis. This inquiry, the most comprehensive since the Misuse of Drugs Act became law in 1971, is a major establishment recognition that alcohol and tobacco are not only more harmful than cannabis but are so dangerous that, if made illegal, they would be classified as class A's. Unsurprisingly, headline hitting proposals which recommended a revolution of pub licensing laws, effectively turning pubs into 24 hour boozers of the twenty first century, look like they will almost certainly be supported by the state.

Influencial style guides have become saturated with alcohol, as brands associate their image with youth culture in a determined bid to re-establish a revenue raising drink as the choice of a generation. Red Bull and Vodka-sponsored club nights have, along with Sony Playsation, become the two most regular brand logos to grace club flyers. An increasingly popular and mutually beneficial way of subsidising the unpredictable business of club promotion. When Jim Carey interviewed the founding director of Red Bull's PR company 'FFI' for Squall magazine, he told him "There's a bit of a return to alcohol, which seems to be the new Ecstasy substitute." I was shocked to learn that FFI also co-produced the sick anti-ecstasy billboard campaign that showed Leah Betts lying comatose in hospital with the words "'SORTED' just one Ecstasy tablet took Leah Betts." Alcohol associated deaths per annum = approx. 25,000, Ecstasy = 12. But it's not a drug, it's a drink. Right kids?

THANKS> www.squall.co.uk

RIP@uncivil.liberties.co.uk

The Regulation of Investigatory Powers is a new bill being railroaded through the commons by the UK Home Office. It is a sinister piece of legislation that will affect all email users, and is a part of an international effort by law enforcement agencies around the globe to be able to intercept and read all forms of digital information.

The scene in Whitehall is a shambles. MP's admit to being bemused, not understanding e-mail encryption, and, in ignorance, hide behind the assumption that the Home Office knows what it's doing.

The bill will make it possible for authorities to spy on the private emails of both individuals and organisations. ISP's will have to build interception facilities into their systems, and will be forced to hand over documentation in compliance with interception warrants. These warrants will be served on named individuals within a company, and only those whose help is needed to implement the warrant are likely to be informed. The penalty for refusing information is a two-year prison sentence, whilst tipping off a client that their email is being read poses up to five years in prison. This further applies to anyone not authorised to know about the interception order, including his or her bosses, an industrial tribunal, or even a court of law. It will become a crime to posses and use privacy encryption technology. Written notices can be served on anyone that enforcement or intelligence agencies have 'reasonable grounds to believe' is holding encryption keys. The same prison sentences apply for refusing information or tipping off.

Many companies are deeply worried and civil liberty lawyers and organisations have condemned the bill. It will almost certainly be challenged using the European Convention on Human Rights.

In Australia, it is already legal for authorities to penetrate anyone's computer at anytime, for any reason of 'National Security' they care to invent, and to do anything it takes to said computer to cover their e-tracks. AOL (America Online) has been used for years as a tool for spying and infiltration, without their clients being made aware that persons or agencies unknown now hold all their personal details and confidential data. Big Brother anyone?

WORDS> low.life

FUTURESONIC
FESTIVAL

Fans of cutting edge electronics will be pleased to hear that the UK's Futuresonic festival returns this coming June. Last held in Leeds back in 1996, the organisers have this year chosen Manchester to host the three days of 'live performances, club nights, multimedia showcases, interactive installations, mutant music machines, workshops, and talks by leading figures working in music and new media'. The festival runs from June 8-11 at venues across the city and the line-up features Rhythm & Sound, Tikiman, Scion, Jega, Merzbow, Bedouin Ascent, Bob Osterag, David Toop, Hexstatic, plus many more including the usual Manchester suspects. Tickets per event start at £7, or you can obtain a full festival pass. For further information call the festival hotline: 0161 835 1111, box office: 0161 274 0600, or log on to their site at http://www.futuresonic.com.

DEADLY VIBRATIONS

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SONIC WARFARE

WORDS>B. G NICHOLS (ECM323 / GeV/ 0Hz)

The history of the application of sound in warfare is, by its very nature cloaked in secrecy and misinformation. Much of what seeps out into public perception has been filtered through government agencies who understandably have a vested interest in protecting such covert and often "black" weapons programmes, and the sensationalist columns of the underground press, whose flirtation with the subject spans at least two decades. Any attempts by myself or others to verify certain "facts" is relatively futile. We report what we hear.

Possibly the first mention of sonic warfare is the now much-cited "Walls of Jericho" scenario, a biblical story which no doubt many of us are familiar with. The walls came tumbling down after the synchronised blast of trumpets and voices rendered it unstable. However, it is only recently that sound has seriously been considered as a valid medium for destruction. Human beings respond to certain categories of sound in a number of complex ways involving auditory perception and psycho-physiological response mechanisms rendered through the brain. Certain species of sound above (ultrasound) or below (infrasound) the levels of human auditory perception would theoretically prove most effective within the crucible of warfare.

During the Vietnam conflict in the early '70's, the US military experimented with a structured programme of psychological warfare, dubbed the Urban Funk Campaign. A sonic weapon known as the "Curdler" or "People Repeller" was employed to disrupt unruly crowds, and generally irritate the enemy during the night. Audio frequency oscillators were mounted on helicopters, and blasted frequencies at "Charlie", ranging from 500-5000 Hz at an amplitude of 120dB - equivalent to the roar of a jet engine at close quarters. This was a highly effective panic-inducing weapon, which was also reputedly deployed during the height of the Northern Ireland conflict. The Urban Funk Campaign also employed an "audio harassment" programme, Wandering Soul, in which recordings of eerie sounds said to represent the souls of the dead were played through the night in order to spook the superstitious enemy. Despite eventually realising that they were hearing a recording beamed from a helicopter, the enemy snipers could not suppress the fear that their souls would some day end up moaning and wailing in a similar fashion after death.

'Certain species of sound above (ultrasound) or below (infrasound) the levels of human auditory perception would theoretically prove most effective within the crucible of warfare.'

Urban Funk Campaign was also putatively responsible for the "Squawk Box" - a device which the British MoD denied existed, although authorities in Lisburn confirmed the existence of the Curdler, which they claimed was in storage, but never used. The Squawk Box was a developmental weapon initiated by a joint military/civilian group of scientists and technicians working in secrecy and with a high degree of autonomy in Lisburn (New Scientist Sept 1973). Mounted on a Land Rover or similar carrier vehicle, this device housed in a 3ft cube was able to emit two marginally different frequencies (eg.16,000 & 16,002 Hz). These component frequencies, their sum and difference, produced a subsonic harmonic of 2Hz (infrasound). It's effective beam was so small and directional that it could target individuals, producing "spooky" psycho-physiological effects such as panic, vomiting, and seizures. It is worthy of note that infrasound is particularly effective in the arousal of fear or anxiety. The experience of auditory stimuli is a function of the nervous system. We are culturally conditioned to interpret sounds, and recognise them, which is why we are roused to anxiety by an experience we can neither interpret nor dismiss as "noise". The very fact that infrasound can be "felt" but not heard creates a frustrated perceptual impulse. Anxiety can only be resolved by attaching it to an object or cause. In the absence of either, we tend to create one, and in most instances we create a supernatural or preternatural one.

'This was a parabolic device which, although untested on humans, was apparently.. "capable of killing a man with sound pressure in about 30-40 seconds.'"

We have spoken so far about psycho-physiological effects of sound as a weapon - but what about the purely physical effects? Going back to our Walls of Jericho scenario, the phenomenon of resonance can potentially be amplified to cause destruction. The opera singer, Caruso, was able to shatter wine glasses with a single note sung at the sympathetic frequency of the glass. In theory the same phenomenon could be created synthetically. In the early 1970's, acoustic engineer Vladimir Gavreau was experimenting with infrasound weaponry. Now the stuff of infrasound legend, Gavreau was responsible for the construction of a giant 6ft whistle, powered by compressed air, which reputedly scrambled the inner organs of it's unfortunate operator (a phenomenon known as "cavitation", where the internal physiology was fatally resonated). Distraught, Gavreau ceased his experiments, but left behind plans and models for highly sophisticated, directional sound cannons, which were apparently seized by the French authorities. In a recent conference with Dr Guy Peter Manners, Professor of Cymatics (a form of sonic therapy), I happened to enquire about his knowledge of Gavreau. It appears that what I had previously assumed was legend was almost certainly true. Although Manners was reluctant to divulge details, he informed me of certain facts which cannot be repeated here as they would breach the conditions of the Official Secrets Act. Manners also informed me of experiments which he had first hand experience of in wartime Germany, where sonic weapons were being developed under a highly classified strategy initiated and financed by Hitler's government. Once again, frustratingly, I cannot release such infor-

mation for at least two more years, but a separate source reveals the fact that the Germans were pioneering a sound-based weapon known as the "Luftkanone", developed at Talstation Lofer. This was a parabolic device which, although untested on humans, was apparently.. "capable of killing a man with sound pressure in about 30-40 seconds. At greater ranges, although not lethal it would be able to disable a man for an appreciable length of time. Vision would be affected, and low-level exposure would cause point sources of light to appear as lines."

'Gavreau was responsible for the construction of a giant 6ft whistle, powered by compressed air, which reputedly scrambled the inner organs of it's unfortunate operator.'

Frequent enquiry on the Internet has revealed that the US government, in partnership with specialist agencies are working on a programme of "non-lethal" weapons systems designed to disable but not destroy enemies. In a recent conversation with a physicist at Sandia National Laboratories, I can confirm that infrasonic weapons are still a viable option, although it comes very low on a list of alternatives due to it's cumbersome nature, and the lack of an effective, and powerful amplification system. This leads us neatly into a slightly more sinister, and perhaps more unreliable subject, which probably warrants an article on its own - HAARP. Conspiracy theorists in their droves are seeing this project (an acronym for High Frequency Active Auroral Research Project) as the target of their vitriol. HAARP was initiated by the US government (again!) for a variety of applications, particularly to enhance global communications. A cursory glance at the HAARP web site will reveal all manner of well-intentioned projects and applications for this "Ionospheric heater" - an array of bizarre looking antennae situated in the back end of Alaska. However, conspiracy theorists claim that the project (reputedly influenced by Tesla technology) has a more sinister intention, and recent investigations highlight a concern that this array can potentially beam EM (electromagnetic) pulses at aircraft, and melt engines, disrupt communications, and destroy life from the upper atmosphere. Although I remain sceptical, I do acknowledge the fact that mankind (and particularly the US military!) has a tendency to use technology to adverse effects. HAARP appears to feed the post cold war paranoia of a suspicious public.

Conversely, there is sufficient evidence from radio hams that the Russians were experimenting with ELF (Extremely Low Frequency) toys at least two decades before HAARP. Radio hams reported ELF clicks from a Russian source being beamed into the US via the airwaves. The Russians were blamed for weather manipulation, mind control, and other unexplainable atmospheric events. Because of the nature of the repeated clicks, the Russian project was dubbed "Woodpecker". Truth, misinformation, or paranoia? Eldon Byrd of the US Naval Surface Weapons Centre who controlled the US Non Lethal Weapons programme in the early 80's, confirms that ELF and electromagnetic devices are feasible - but it appears that yet again, all details are contained within the secure "black" world of hidden research projects. The US Department of Justice report on ELF weapons, disclosed that sustained exposure to ELF radiation can produce nausea or disorientation. One researcher subjected animals to ELF radiation through implants, and feels that similar results can be produced from afar without implants. Russian scientists have already claimed to be able to induce sleep from afar (electrosleep) by similar methods. Doubtless, more information on sonic weapons will come to light as information becomes declassified. It would appear overall, that the impracticalities of certain sonic weapons systems far outweigh more sophisticated counterparts... I wait to be surprised!

Special thanks and acknowledgements to: Joe Banks (Disinformation), AMOK Journal, Dr Guy Peter Manners, for direct and indirect help with this article. Further info or feedback would be gratefully accepted: actionc@aol.com

OVERLOAD WEB BROWSER

ESSENTIAL WEB MATTER

DECADENT ACTION
http://www.underbelly.demon.co.uk/decadent/
Perhaps the most unlikely basis for a revolutionary organisation, Decadent Action espouse a brilliantly simple ethos of bringing capitalism to its knees through living the high-life, spending as much money as possible, waiting for the inevitable downfall of society and generally flaunting what you've got in the process (even if you haven't got it). Your full-time activist may find this attitude utterly offensive, but to be honest, I like it and seem to have been unknowingly practising it for the last 8 years or so.

SCHNEWS
http://www.schnews.org.uk/
...However, if you're after some real state threatening action, this is the site to look up. Schnews is just about the most interesting political read on the web. Lovingly compiled by the Brighton based activists, Schnews is based upon the premise that we should "not believe the written word, but get up off your arse and go and see things for yourself." This could all lead to a mind-numbingly boring and self-righteous waffle zone, but fortunately Schnews is a humorous, engaging read and refreshingly free from personal agendas. Essential.

ALL MUSIC GUIDE
http://allmusic.com/
This is a mammoth site that really does cover ALL music. Type in any artist, title, label or style and AMG will reward you with a full discography, track-listings, links to similar artists, side-projects and much more. Perhaps the most fun to be had out of this site is trying to find an artist that it doesn't have info on, so comprehensive is the coverage.

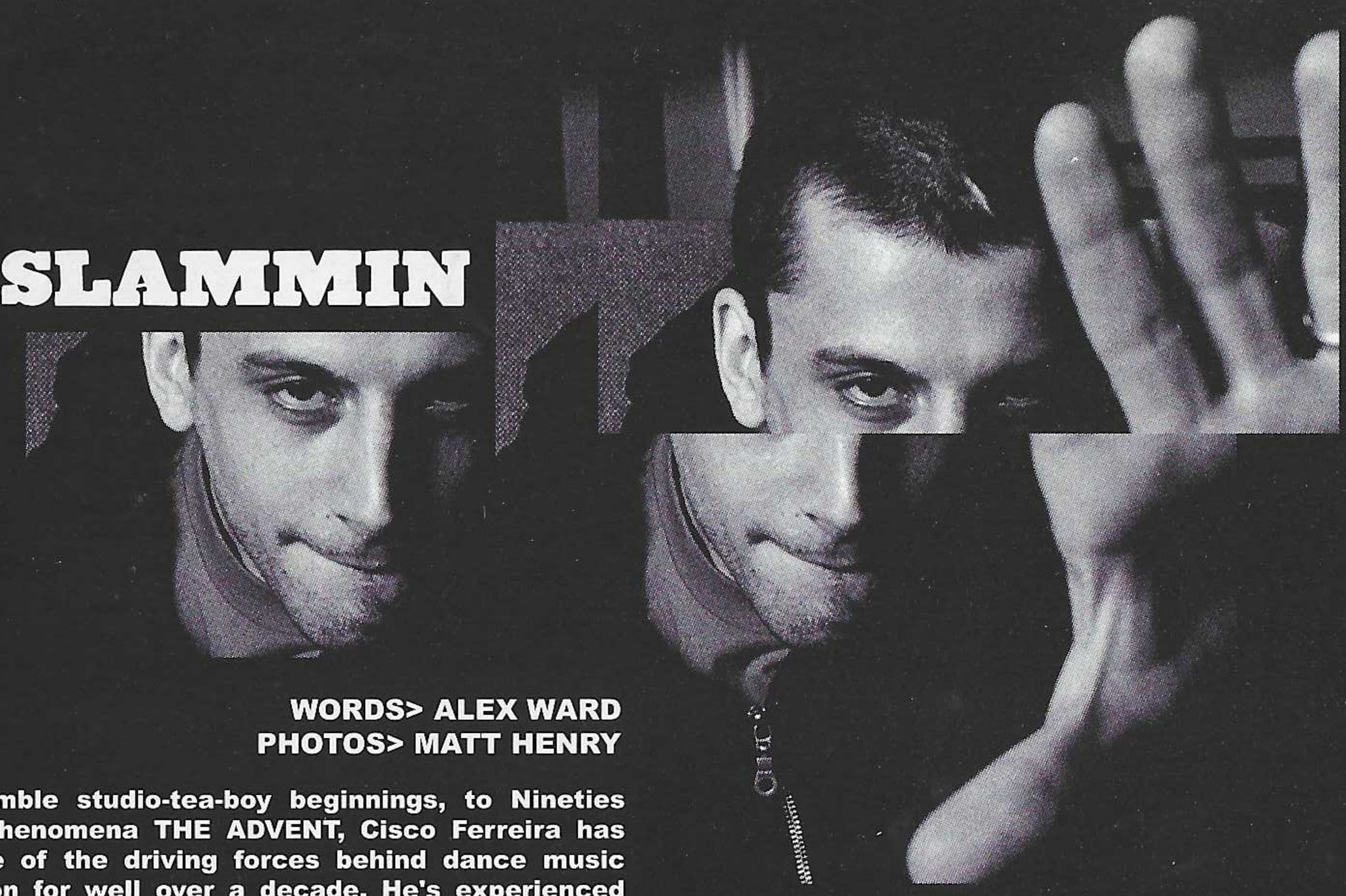
KNOWHERE
http://www.knowhere.co.uk/
MOTION
http://motion.state51.co.uk/
Two vastly different sites coming from a highly focused and cool group of people. Multimedia types State 51 refer to themselves as a 'conspiracy', but by the looks of it are purely dedicated to providing cutting-edge, usable web-sites. Knowhere takes the brilliant precipice of letting resident's review their own town. I was in stiches as I saw what people had to say about my home-town, but there's useful local knowledge to be got out of here too. Motion is a much classier looking music site with reviews covering a whole host of styles but focusing mainly on techno and the avant-garde. But there's no clutter, no attitude and no advertising! You will find yourself going back for more and more...

SOMACITY
http://www.somacity.com
And finally, a poke in the eye to yer run-of-the-mill music sites. Visually styled as a city on the net, Somacity brings together many of the record shops, magazines, cinemas, radio stations and independent music labels we all know and love. Somacity is a true collective effort that weaves together the many strands of today's underground music scene. Although still under construction, Somacity.com will soon be live, with content from London's Atlas Record Shop, Interface Pirate Radio, as well as a cinema showing shorts and an area where labels can promote their latest material. Integral to the site is Milesahead magazine, who already have their building accessible at milesahead.co.uk, so check them out to feel the future. Sounds interesting, looks great, tastes fantastic, get your teeth in quick!

AND DON'T FORGET OVERLOAD ONLINE @ www.overloadmedia.co.uk

WORDS> THE ASP

...SLAMMIN



WORDS> ALEX WARD
PHOTOS> MATT HENRY

From humble studio-tea-boy beginnings, to Nineties techno phenomena THE ADVENT, Cisco Ferreira has been one of the driving forces behind dance music production for well over a decade. He's experienced the whole freakshow, and enjoyed every minute of it, well, not quite... Now, working solo in his East London studio following a logical spilt from long-term gig partner Colin McBean, Cisco Ferreira turns down the mixing desk and lets off some steam for Overload.

Cisco's old school. "I've been doing it since 1987 - a long time" recounts Cisco as he enthusiastically positions himself in classic tongue-in-cheek techno poses for the bemusement of our photographer. "It's an industry that you can't look at in the short term; you have to look at doing it for a long time. I'm married, I've got 2 kids now, but I still want to be making music when I'm 50."

It was about '94 when I heard my first Advent track. In the six years since, their unmistakable framework of alien groove and funk-driven percussion, often copied yet rarely improved upon, has accounted for more moments of unparalleled dancing pleasure than I could possibly recall. Teaming up in production partnership with Colin McBean, Cisco, the engineer who was responsible for 50% of CJ Bolland's incredible album 'The 4th Sign', has spent the last seven years channelling his remarkable studio skills into pure irresistible dancefloor fodder. "If I were to release an ambient Advent album it really wouldn't work" he smiles, knowing full well that the people who buy his records associate The Advent with techno, electro and a sprinkling of house, but certainly nothing beatless. "The thing that's closest to my heart is clubbing. When I was going out clubbing I used to dance and really get down if the DJ was working hard. Everyone sweating, I used to love those times. You'd go out and really enjoy yourself, and the music touched you."

DJs, press and punters alike went nuts over the first EP releases through Internal, and by the time their first album 'Elements of Life' hit the shops, The Advent were well on their way to becoming the hottest live techno act on the circuit. Five years down the line, and Cisco is still busy searching for new formulas to work the floor, both live and on vinyl, whilst Colin now pursues a more house-orientated sound under his Mr G pseudonym. The studio separation was totally harmonious. Indeed, for both of them it was the logical solution needed to move the music on to the next step. "I was more like the engineer programmer person, and he was more the DJ with the collection. He's got at least 20 to 30,000 records now, covering everything, R&B, disco, reggae, electronic, new wave, etc. Any tune that I'd say to him "I've been thinking about this tune..." - he'd bring it in the following week. He wanted to get into the programming side, and eventually that started to happen and he needed his own set-up. So we decided to split, not in terms of hatred or anything like that - he was the best man at my wedding, know what I mean."

Further change looms on the horizon, with his new label project poised for action and an imminent (albeit not permanent) move to Portugal also on the cards. "I've just started a house label in New York, Alpha Recordings, which is going to be an outlet for my G Flame stuff, but I'd like another label to other outlets as well, maybe an electro label. There's so much to do out there, tracks to be made that are going to touch people, not just me but everyone. The best tracks are still to be recorded. If you thing about the music change from now to ten years, and the quality, it's totally different."

"If I were to release an ambient Advent album it really wouldn't work."

Like the split with Colin, the move to Portugal is also a sign of moving on, temporarily displacing the shadowy feel of London, with new sunnier climes. "There's a lot of really good techno producers in England, probably more than anywhere else in the world. They're appreciated everywhere except back home. London, in terms of the club scene is very influenced by the US. That's cool, because there is a lot of good stuff coming from the US, but they don't really look for talent at home. It's only very recently that they've been doing that, and then it's been Europe, like France - Stardust and stuff. That's just Thomas [Bangalter] doing something else, apart from the Daft Punk stuff, and they picked up on it. Some people don't even know he's in Daft Punk. The idiots in the industry are like "Oh Stardust - very good - 70's revival band."

'Shaded Elements' showcased many of Cisco and Colin's favourite producers, a remix album project based on the first Internal album and subsequently released on the label in 1996 which roped in top UK artists such as Steve Bicknell, Luke Slater, Mark Bell and Surgeon. "When we released Elements of Life, we got really good feedback and we decided we had to get these guys and do remixes. So we gave the concept to Internal. The only ones we didn't get were Jeff, Maurizio and DJ Hell. Mills just took a while and we couldn't wait for him. Maurizio just doesn't do things unless it's for people from Detroit, and Hell was doing his album. We had everybody else that we wanted really, and the feedback again was wicked." But it was shortly after this release that Cisco and Colin began experiencing problems with industry mechanisms, as Internal collapsed from the inside. Things went all Pete Tong, literally, as Cisco and Colin found themselves relocated at FFRR with a greener-than-grass Tong at the label's helm. As Cisco once said in an interview with Magic Feet, "Pete Tong ain't the best A&R man for techno." And ain't that the truth. "He didn't criticize it, but you could feel that he didn't really understand it. We were like "do you know

anything about up to date techno?" And he was like, "Well I'm into Kevin Saunderson, Derrick May, Juan Atkins..." They're still cool DJ's, but I'm asking him "have you heard of Jeff Mills, Underground Resistance, Surgeon?" All these people, and he honestly hadn't heard of any of them. That was 4 years ago and now he's had Jeff doing the essential mix and all that. He's trying to be hip and "Yeah, I know all about it", but he doesn't know shit. He's just into the big boys, commercial, and that's the way the industry works in this country. Because of the big superclubs, it's all become about hype and fashion, and not so much about the music."

It's not really surprising that The Advent do very little press. "I don't do interviews" states Cisco, somewhat wrongly, clearly, before launching into a monologue about the commercialisation of dance music and the tabloid-style exploitation of drug counterculture. "It's fucking cheap. A cheap PR stunt. They know it's going to work and that people are going to buy it. But our scene's about the music, that, to me is important, but with these twats it's like "We gotta get drugs, we gotta get T-shirts made with pills on. We've really gotta think of good PR for this month's mag - I know, we'll get the Gatecrasher kids on the cover, totally out of it...It's boring. Like Jules saying he can't stand people with glow sticks... Well, stop playing at their parties then. They only look like that because they want to look like you mate, and you look like you might have glow sticks hidden in your back pocket! I think the only person out of that whole scene who's giving any decent exposure is Coxy. He'll go to a techno club and play techno."

"Oh, nice G-string David Morales, where did you get that one from?"

You have no doubt that Cisco could talk for weeks about his endless experiences on the road with Colin given the chance. From the Liquid Rooms in Tokyo and The Omen in Frankfurt, to Berlin's Love Parade, Tribal Gathering, the Orbit, Atomic Jam and, er, Cream. "We played at Cream once for Carl [Cox], me and Colin a long time ago, and it was the worst experience we've ever had. They put us right on the fucking corner, and only about three people could stand there. We were right under the smoke machine, with it pointing at our faces. The music went down, but they just didn't know how to put us there. It was like "Live show? We don't get many of those. We get PA's, but what, you're bringing your studio?" They're just not used to that. The live house acts that come over - like Ultra Nate, that's not live music."

Ask Cisco, or a seasoned Advent fan which experience is the better, the Advent live or DJing, and there'll be no hesitation. "I like live. You can communicate with the crowd in a different way than when you're Djing. When Djing you can only utilise plastic. Live you can utilise what's in the plastic, extend certain sections, if there's something that's really driving the crowd mad then you can carry that on and really fuck them up if you want to. You have total control. With records you can have control, but that's down to your skill, how you can cut records in, how you can mix two constantly to make it sound like another record. I hate these people who say a techno live act is just a guy on stage banging his head up and down. I don't see anything wrong with that, because if you've got a live performance from one guy and his little setup kicking arse, and then there's you with a guy playing the drums, a guy playing the congas, and the music's shit..."

Seizing the opportunity, I ask him about the leaders of the new school. "I like Frank Hunter from Birmingham, I really like his style. He's part of the Regis Camp, the Downward Crew - I really like his flavour. And Angel Alanis, I'm beginning to like more his house stuff than his techno stuff. Chris McCormack is just slamming; everything he does is just really well produced and well thought out. When you play it, it just kicks arse. He's there. His records are on fire."

Through discussing new talent, the recent Miami music conference casually slips into conversation. "I spoke to a few guys who came back from there and they said it was really kind of just - you know..." I ask Cisco if he ever attends such events. "Not at all. If I was to go there it would be from a raver's point of view, it wouldn't be to chat, everyone talking on the poolside with their G-strings on... "Oh, nice G-string David Morales, where did you get that one from?" Instead of talking about white labels they're talking about fucking G-strings. It's not about music now." With such lucid personal insight into the industry, he doesn't seem particularly phased about the recent UR / SONY cover-version controversy. "Major record company - it's typical, they shouldn't do that" he moans. "But at the end of the day you're getting people cover records all day long. All Saints do it, Spice Girls do it. It's part of the industry - "Oh we love that song, we'll cover it." I think they've taken the same approach with this track, but they've picked on the wrong record. The original is such a beautiful piece of music, there's nothing out there that sounds like it, it is it's own piece of work, and when you hear it out in a club it's such a wicked feeling, it's just got that vibe to it. I went to some shops in the States 3 weeks ago, and they were all refusing to stock it. That's good. It's fucked up. There are not too many rules in the industry. If somebody wants to bootleg your track then they can do it, release it, black label, no information. It's in the shops, some guy out the back of a van - "how many do you want? 20? No problem, done." There's no rules, it's a dog-eat-dog industry."

"If somebody wants to bootleg your track then they can do it, release it, black label, no information. It's in the shops, some guy out the back of a van - "How many do you want? 20? No problem, done." There's no rules, it's a dog-eat-dog industry."

Since the problematic launch of their 'New Beginnings' album on FFRR, Cisco's mighty Kombination Research label has been the output source for most Advent material. You can almost see the scars across his face from their many years of involvement with a dubious record industry. "I'm not going to go into a big deal, not for a long time, because you can do it yourself. The rewards are better as well. They're not on a bigger scale, because a major record company will pump money into your adverts, get you into the press and all the right magazines - but I'm not really into that. We've played that game and I'm not sure if I want that ever again. Everyone who is making cutting music is doing it on their own labels. It does work because you can portray your image exactly how you want it, there's no stupid arsehole saying to you "the hi hats are too low, can you turn the hi-hats up please!" It's like HELLO, if you want to make music then go into the studio and make your own fucking music. You make music for yourself and what you want out of it. I'm lucky and fortunate that I'm getting paid to do something that I love. Music is an important part of life. It would be a fucking strange place without it."

'Past Forward' by the Advent is out now on Conform. 'Generation X' by G. Flame is out soon on Alpha Records NYC.

OVERLOAD

NEW RELEASES

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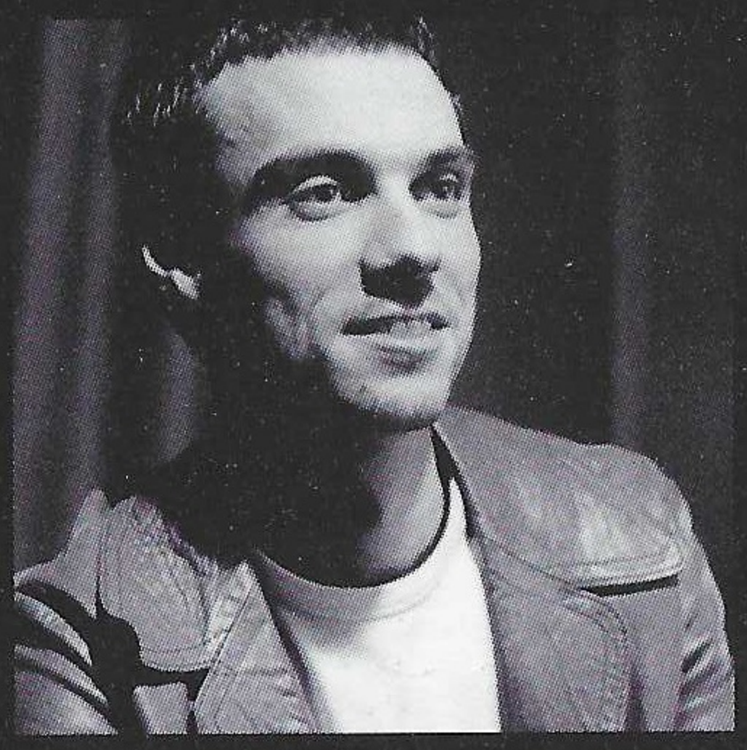
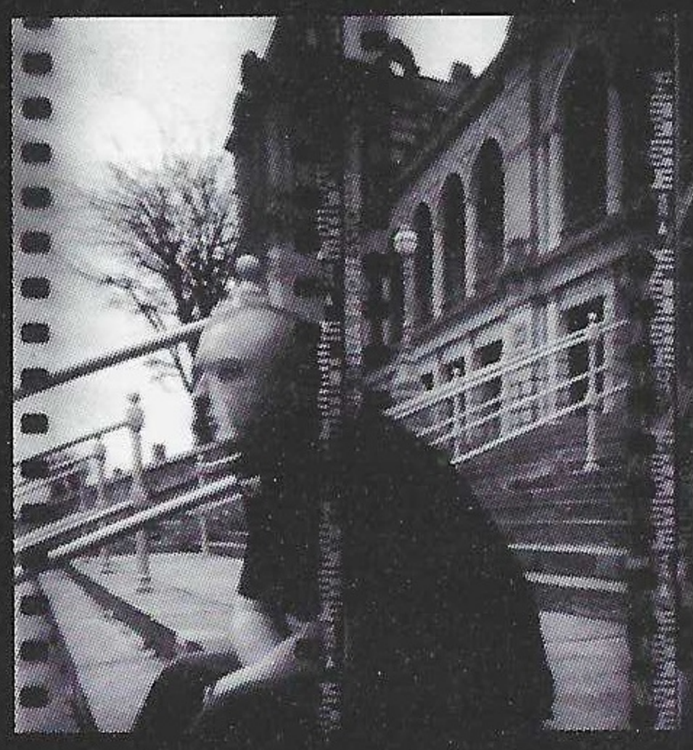
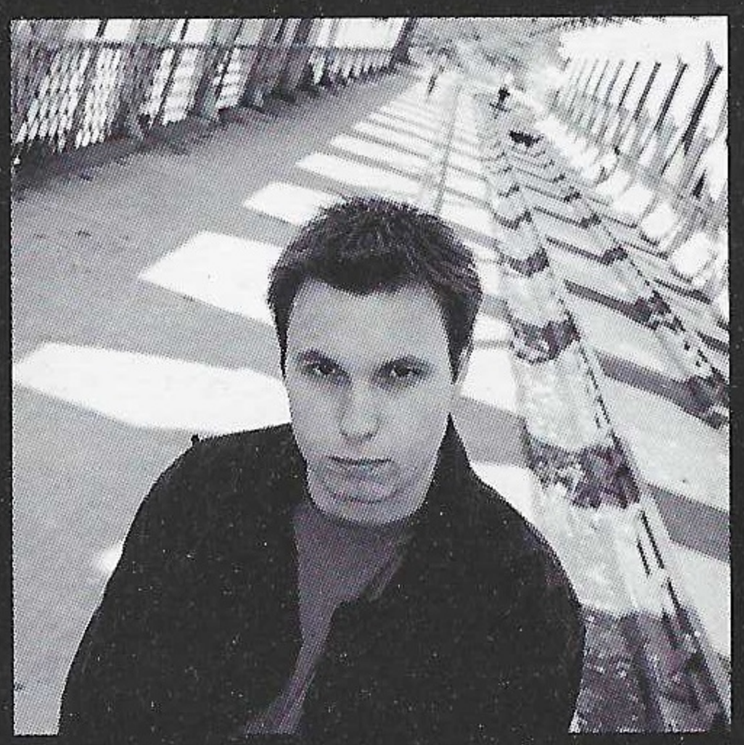
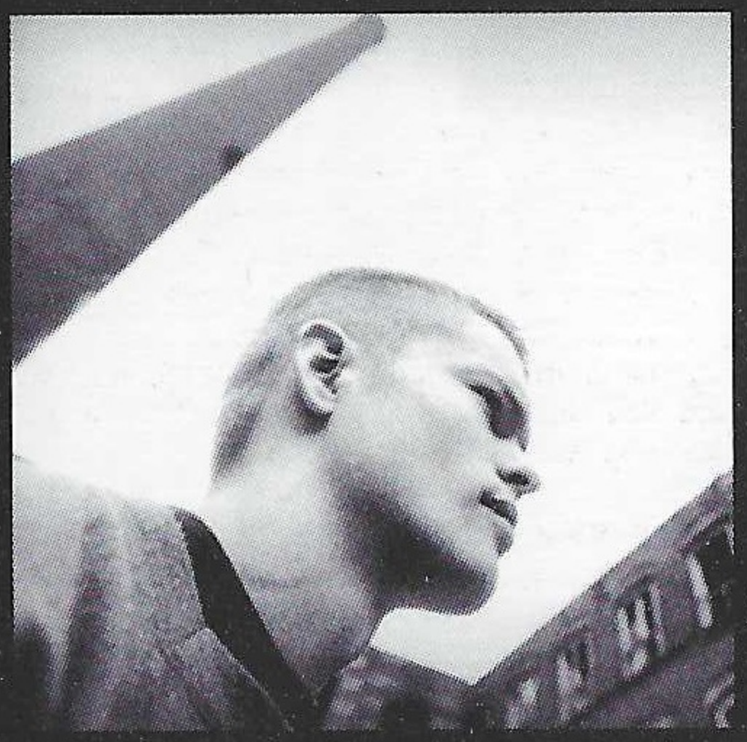
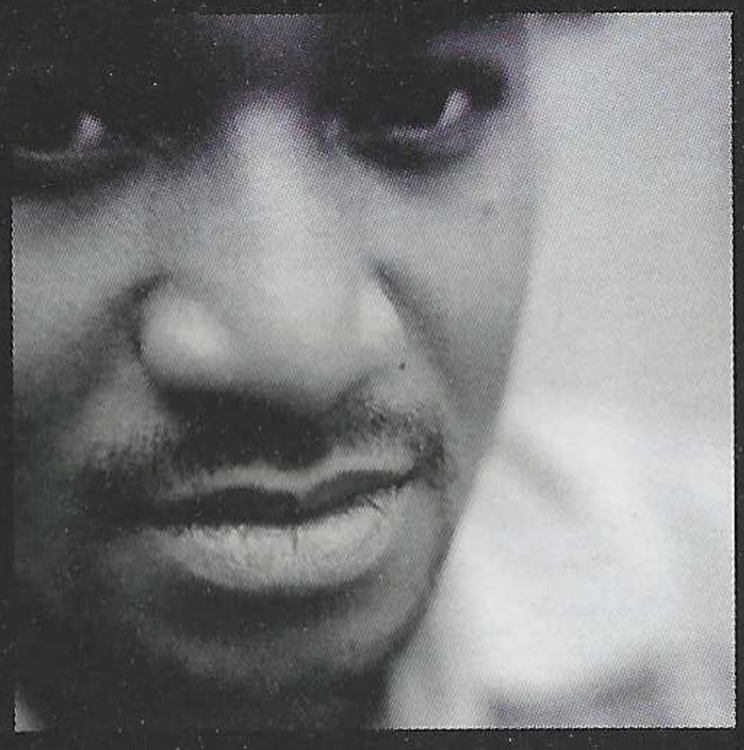
Steve Bug, James Ruskin, Jamie Anderson, Pole, Surgeon, Buscemi, Sofa Surfers, Sterac, Ben Sims, Dan Bell, Blueprint, Steve Stoll

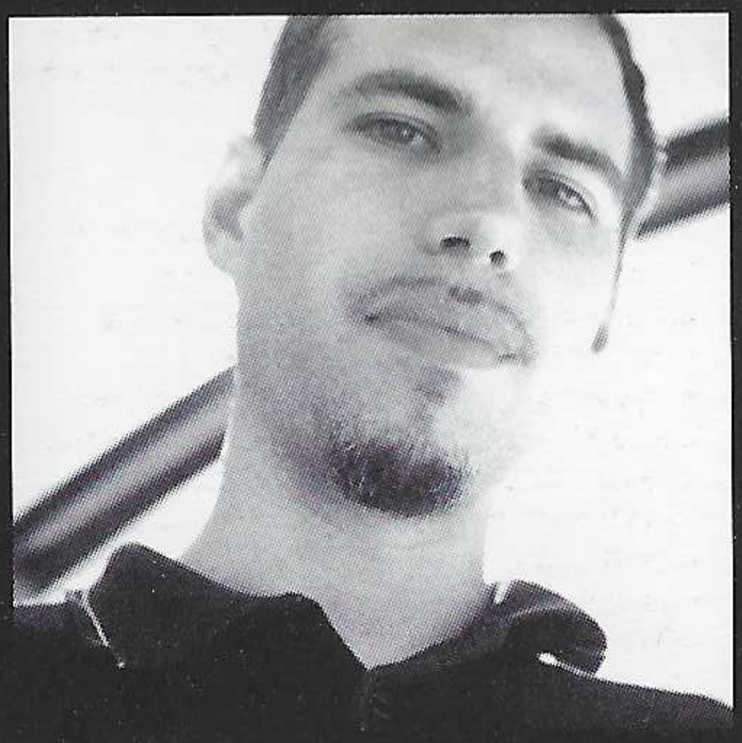


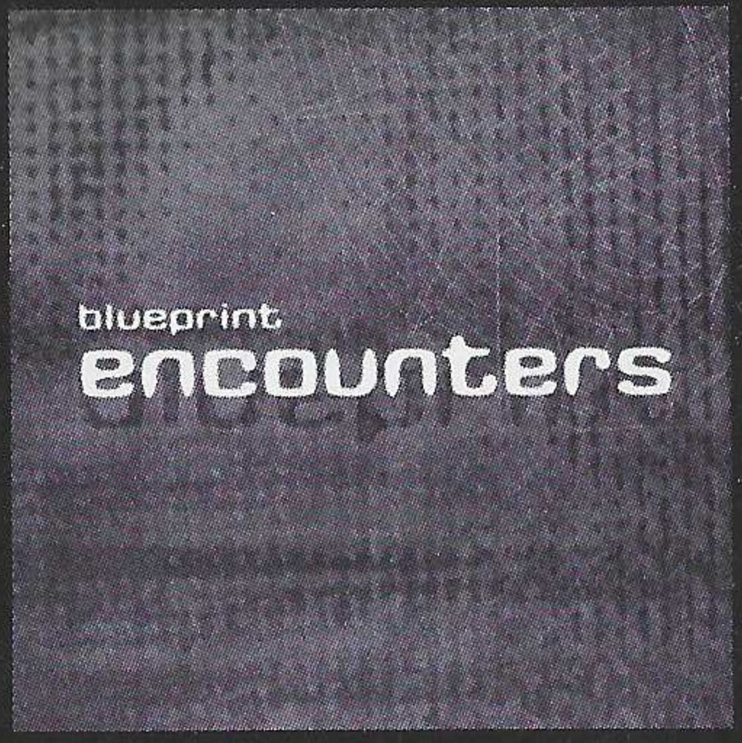


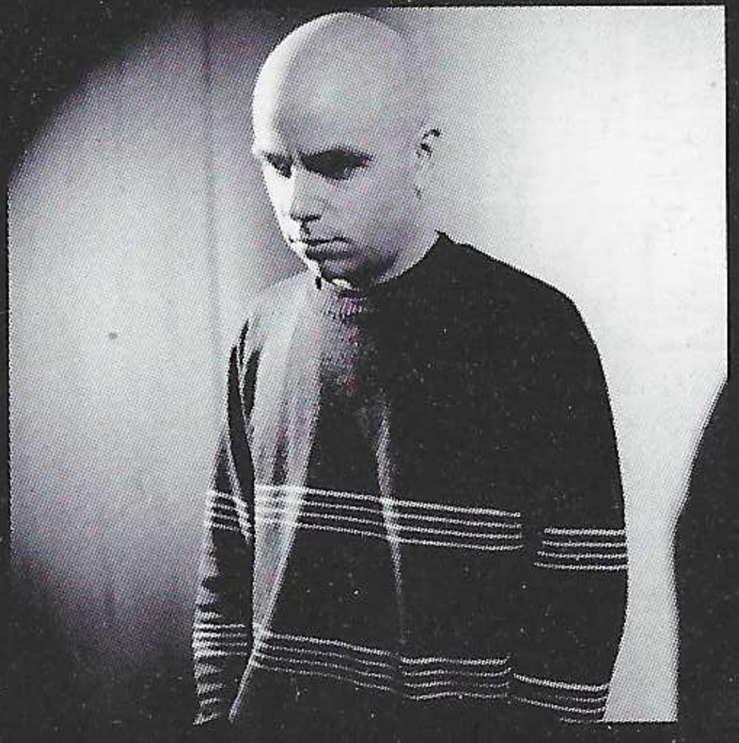












NEW RELEASES NEW RELEASES NEW RELEASES

WELCOME to the new music release section of Overload. Thanks to everyone who has submitted material for review in issue #2 - sorry we couldn't fit everything in. Please send new material for review to:

OVERLOAD MEDIA
PO BOX 41
BRISTOL
BS16 3ZB

The opinions expressed here are those of the individual reviewer and not necessarily those of Overload Magazine.

REVIEW SQUAD THIS ISSUE...
Tom Magic Feet, Dave Stelfox, SZA, Bloodshot, Paul Gannaway, Nick Craddock, Motorboy, Steady Freddie, Miles Hawthorne, Hedley, Valerie Snails.

SINGLES

FAST BREEDER 'Diode EP' (Adapted Vinyl)
Intriguing new label from Newcastle, adapting the percussive Purposemaker sound to give a much more synthetic feel. What particularly grabs me about this second release is how it relies on the well-placed use of tones and textures to keep pace and movement, rather than the familiar cop-out option of hi-hats and ride cymbals. A prime example of a new label experimenting to find it's own sound. And when they do, you'd better be listening. **VS**

REPEAT ORCHESTRA 'ATC 002' (A Touch of Class)
A touch of class indeed, from Dusseldorf newcomers Repeat Orchestra. Four deliciously deep cuts of ultra-stripped-down house, fusing tender chords and unobtrusive Detroitesque melodies with skeletal dubwise drum-programming. To be honest, most of the tracks are better suited to home listening than the urban dancefloor environment, although 'Virus' does have some infectious drive in the bottom-end department, which will no doubt earn the disc some box space with yer more discerning deep house boyz 'n girls. **VS**

G. FLAME 'Generation X' (Alpha Records NYC)
Cisco Ferreira turns up the heat with his new stateside house imprint, and as you'd expect, house muzak from the Advent School of Dancefloor Appreciation has more than a hint of techno-sis about it. 'Roundways' is a monstrous filtered muthafucker, with large bass and even larger hats fighting for room in the funk-filled framework. On the flip, 'Man De Banco' and 'Some Body' keep up the pace yet drop the pressure, slightly. Prepare to dance like a fool. **VS**

MAX DULEY 'Storyteller' (Arc(ane))
The twisted tones of Max Duley once more permeate the shops, carving a metallic groove across dancefloors all around the globe. 'The Nowhere Express' dominates all other cuts on the EP with it's driving percussion and liquid synth, but 'Shift It' adopts a very heavy deep groove which works well in it's simplicity. I eagerly await his forthcoming 'Mist' project on Steve Bicknell's Cosmic label. **SF**

JAMIE ANDERSON 'Latinsim - Phase Three' (Artform)
Part three of Jamie Anderson's Latinism series displays broad insight into the multifaceted music style of the much-wanted Bristol label-boss. Side-A opts for a well-produced filtered techno cut in the form of 'Latin Energy' whilst 'Rio Grande' (remixed by Access 58) and 'The Carnival' infuse jazz leanings and Latino spice into an effective party house environment. Ai Carumba! **SF**

INIGO KENNEDY 'Difficult Third' (Asymmetric)
Inigo Kennedy returns with 4 rock-hard techno assaults and a number of locked grooves. The full-length tracks are all industrial flavoured with horror house effects, whose crashing beats, complex rhythms and oppressive melodies result in prime time tools for the harder dancefloor. The A2 track works best for this reviewer. **MH**

MARCIN CZUBALA 'Funktion EP' (Automatic)
Abstract techno funk from Poland's Marcin Czubala. The opener is the real gem, utilising a subtle yet powerful bass kick emphasising a relentless mechanic rhythm and seductive off-beat voice snippet repetition - awesome. Overall, the EP is let down by two uneventful electro-informed rhythm workouts and a bells, bleeps and bass track that tries to emulate Landstrumm's 'Bedrooms and Cities' style a little too close for comfort. It's in the box for the opening track alone though. **SZA**

>RECOMMENDED<
V/A 'Futuristic Experiments Chapter 2' (Background Records)
Every other record that has arrived at Overload HQ recently seems to feature either Kit Clayton or Stewart Walker. Such regularity is all-too appreciated, especially considering the quality keeps rising with each record. Clayton and Walker maintain their usual high standard of fractured futurism, whilst California's Sutekh delivers an outstanding work of digi-dub reminiscent of Black Dog's 'Sharp Shooting on Saturn'. A broody bass-heavy soundscape from Submania completes one of the best experimental EPs I've heard in a long, long time. **VS**

H VS NUCCLE 'Riot Tone' (Black and White)
As the title suggests the latest offering from John Nuccle and Mike Humphries ain't no quiet walk in the park on a sunny Sunday morning. Two tracks of high-octane thumping techno targeted at the dancefloor and nowhere else. If you like listening to hard fast beat-driven loops in foggy dark rooms full of mad jumping, sweaty people, this is especially for you. **M**

BOTCHIT BREAKS 3 'Sampler' (Botchit and Scarper)
Three of the label's leading lights give a taster of what's to come on the next Botchit compilation. Freq Nasty leads the way with 'Tumour', creating a new breakbeat experience with one of the dirtiest, lowest basslines ever committed to vinyl. Blim gets the usual high standard remix treatment from T-Power on 'Filterzone', leaving Orange Kush with an electro workout to relieve the mental pressure. **B**

SPORTO KANTES 'Party EP' (Catalogue)
WILLIAMS TRAFFIC 'I Man Dub EP' (Catalogue)
Paris' Catalogue imprint has been bringing the discerning record-buying public its own brand of rarefied electronic gems for some time now and with two four-track, 12-inch releases on the way from Sporto Kantes and Williams Traffic, you are in for a treat. The Sporto Kantes EP plumbs familiar languid, downbeat depths with the evocative vocal samples of 'Party' and the dubbed-down grooves of 'Oh Nuit' before moving on to the wicked new reggae of 'Buster' and 'Food' with its female vocal funk. Williams Traffic break more ethnic, experimental ground with the twisted raps of 'I Man Dub' and the Middle Eastern vibes of 'Reflection' while the B-side ushers in the jazzy and slightly disturbing 'Dark Blue' and 'Albertine D'. Two useful bits of plastic. **DS**

PILOTE 'No Truck' (Certificate 18)
Brighton-based Pilote produces deliciously slow 'n sloppy breakbeat tracks on an old PC and a dodgy Yamaha keyboard. His deliberately lo-fi sound always drips with soul, with all three tracks on 'No Truck' being dark and melancholic, yet blissful in their playful splendour. 'Junior' appeals most, a graceful chunk of chill out music requiring repeated listening. **M**

LOSOUL 'Lies' (Classic)
Keeping the rep intact for the consistently stunning Classic label, this 12" offers three remixes of the title track, plus newie 'Raw Beauty'. All three versions bring something different to the table - from the creepy vox and dirty analogue funk of 'Watch Your Lift', the organic instrumentation and Altered States-esque synth line of The Freaks' Dub, to the tinny hopscotch beats and churning bass of 'No Ears'. Oh, and 'Raw Beauty' is wicked too. Happy days. **NC**

PETER KRUDER 'Rootdown' (Compost)
After a visit to Rainer Trüby's fabled dancefloor jazz night of the same name, Richard Dorfmeister's other half was moved to document the experience in musical form - and what a job he did. 'Rootdown' is the first piece ever recorded by Peter Kruder under his own name and will be coming out on a limited one-sided pressing in late May but, facts and figures aside, it's the music that matters. Bounding along at house tempo, this track is full of dense percussion and subtle melody offset by a deep, dark atmosphere reminiscent of seedy basement clubs and a few too many tequilas. Halfway in, woozily shuffling rhythms complement filthy, rumbling bass tones along broadly Latin lines, building up to a mood that falls somewhere between scary, sexy and sassy but always danceable and idiosyncratic. **DS**

ROB ALCOCK 'Emergence' (Continual)
Ealing's techno massive strips down to the bare essentials for another futuristic excursion into textured minimalism. The lead cut on the A-side glides along in simplistic yet effective form, building high-pitched layers above a deep drum workout. The two cuts on the B dive deeper still, B1 almost finding a tribal house groove. A record that definitely falls into the 'doesn't do much, but what it does do it does bloody well' category, which, I suppose, is the whole point. **VS**

NEW RELEASES NEW RELEASES NEW RELEASES

>RECOMMENDED<
SURGEON 'La Real' (Counterbalance)
Coming at you like nuclear disco, Tony Child's second Counterbalance EP helps to further define a sound for his new label that falls somewhere between bassy industrial house and hard Latino drumfunk. A1 has more weight and drive than a herd of rhinos, and enough funk to cause structural damage to most dancefloors. I defy you to remain unmoved. **VS**

PHUTURE 303 'Soulgers of Tekno' (Creators of Deepness)
Seminal soldiers of techno, Phuture 303 keep up the rump-shakin' shenanigans with this acid-tinged twin-set of tidy techno thumpers. Perhaps not as immediate or as innovative as the previous two releases on this classy new-ish Chicago imprint, but there's plenty of percussive and structural interest to be found none the less. Just a shame they can't spell. **VS**

TRANSPARENT SOUND 'Freaks Frequency Remixed' (Crayon)
The original is a solid electro track with Dr.Who style sounds and a voice sample throughout, whilst Aubrey turns in a pumping tech-house version, retaining the voice but losing the other electro elements. The flip features a Mark Ambrose version, which is more downbeat, and another track 'Thru' which bleeps along nicely with some watery Eastern sounding melodies. **MH**

TANGTRON 'State of the Art' (Cytrax)
Spacious rhythm experiments from Tangtron, whose first EP release is a slightly more awkward offering than your usual Cytrax fare, yet ultimately rewarding upon a few listens. The title track 'State of the Art' is a real grower, with heavy phasing making it sound tranced-out to fuck. It'll be interesting to watch those ideas mutate in the future. **SF**

OKA & YAMAZAKI 'Tapping EP' (Dark House Music)
Killer tribal loops from Kenichi Oka and Yoshinori Yamazaki, proving conclusively that this label has got absolutely fuck-all to do with house music. There's no doubt that this oriental duo have got what it takes to rock a dancefloor at fùll velocity, a trait particularly obvious on 'Demon' which throbs relentlessly amidst a sea of stabs, conga rolls and growling synth lines. A useful tool for pushing the pace at peak-time sweat parlours. **VS**

BE BOP DAWG 'Les Enfants EP' (Dynamite Joint)
Dynamite Joint bring it on with an explosive EP of three new-jazz cuts from Be Bop Dawg - aka Lasser Jensen from Denmark. 'Les Enfants' is fuelled by staccato beats, drifting harmony and occasional off-kilter analogue stabs while 'Flatbush Dawn' opts for a more subtly melodic style, welded to a slick dancefloor beat, full of lightly brushed percussion and sensual French vocal samples. Finally Alex Attias turns in a wandering, dub-influenced remix of the Latin grooves of 'Catalyst Bossa' to round off a more than worthwhile piece of vinyl. Top stuff. **DS**

SECRET CINEMA 'Volt' (EC Records)
Responsible for the seminal 'Timeless Altitude' also on EC, Jeroen Verheij (Secret Cinema) has a fine pedigree. Here he gives us a typically furious four-to-the-floor techno track utilising reverberating bass and a filtered noise that sounds like an aircraft passing overhead. Nothing really new but kicking hard nonetheless. The flip has a hypnotic little number with syncopated beats and a jerky swing to it, whilst the remix included adds a synth riff to calm down the mood. Solid dancefloor fare all round. **MH**

MICHEL DE HEY VS LITERON 'Cloaked' (EC Records)
A real grower. Fairly traditional rhythms and housey bass compete with an out of control crackling analogue synth in the original mix, whilst the lush Circulation mix is melodic house aimed firmly at the listening environment, with fuzzy strings enveloping some subtle cymbals and well thought out bleeps. **PG**

FIX 'Rucklette' (Fix)
Jason Subhead teams up with PH Factor, Kit and Unknown 2000 to crank up the weirdness. You can always count on anything Subhead-related to provide at least a couple of corking tunes, and here the wacky rock-fuelled rhythms of 'Define Light' and 'Mile-High Club' will provide any open-minded clubber with something that bit more intangible to get their fancy foot-work around. **PG**

CiM 'Warm Data' (Focus)
An appropriate title for this 8-track release. With gentle, funky beats and mellow synth backdrops it would be easy to give the impression that this is unadventurous chill-out music. But CiM takes a refreshingly straight-forward approach to producing. There's no awkward aspirations for grandeur here, just a spiritual kinship with Aphex Twin's first 'Selected Ambient Works' album and the promotion of melodic funk excellence. **PG**

LACKLUSTER 'Suntrap' (Focus)
A good taster to see if you're going to get-off on the succulent sounds of Lackluster's album. 'Cullstreak' is a blissful surf into rain-drop melodies, whilst the title track steps up the pace a bit, evoking the sort of emotions I can only associate with not wanting to get out of bed on a really sunny day. **PG**

BEN SIMS 'Hardgroove Special Edition 001' (Hardgroove)
BEN SIMS VS S.L.S. 'Loops and Dubs' (Hardgroove)
Ever-welcome floor filling grooves from one of London's top loop manufacturers. One Sims 2-tracker limited to 800 copies, plus a spilt Hardgroove 003, drafting in the much-talked about talents of Samuel L. Sessions to fuel the funk fantastic by working with elements from the first two. Both new EPs are deep and accessible, with the rawer sounding Special Edition release likely to cause the most profuse sweating. Functional as ever. **VS**

HANNA 'Talk to God EP' (Headspace)
It's kind of refreshing to hear Hanna try and infuse some soul into house music. But this release goes nowhere in a pretty lethargic way, and there's a xylophone on one of the tracks, which is something I just can't forgive. **PG**

>RECOMMENDED<
STEWART WALKER MEETS DAVE OLSON & SCOTT RADKE 'Descending to Zero' (Hi Pass Music)
Haunting experimental techno - the kind of stuff that would send you into utter hypnosis if you accidentally tuned into it on a radio station. Rattling electronics textures, warm percussion and deep elegant basslines steer the way on the better tracks, which clearly present themselves as Walker's remix of 'December's People' and Olson & Radke's indecently sublime 'Evolutionist Dogma'. I can't stop listening to this. **SF**

ANDREAS KREMER 'The Night Of The Crash Test Puppies' (Holzplatten)
New double pack from Kremer, offering 8 tracks of no-nonsense, building, industrial hard techno. Whilst the title makes it clear that the music isn't of an easy listening nature, with this much material on display it would have been nice to see a little variation. It all sounds a bit old and tired, and you'd be hard pushed to find any innovation. As someone once said in a different context - It Is What It Is. **NC**

DAWN PATROL 'Mole Grips / Two's Up' (Infectious)
The latest slab of pounding party tracknology from London's Infectious crew. Two well-engineered upfront animals that take the London party sound to a higher level of 'avin it. Both are packed with plenty of drive alongside an undeniable predictability, and therefore much more likely to find appeal with techno tourists that techno purists. **VS**

FRANK HUNTER 'Twister' (Installation Records)
DJs who like their techno tough, dark and minimal will have already picked up on Hunter's previous releases on Terminal and Mono. This delectible doublepack of funky club loopage certainly helps affirm good credentials for this rising Birmingham producer who is currently receiving praise from the likes of Steve Bicknell and Cisco Ferreira. B2 and C1 stand out as particularly slamming, but DJs who like to get stuck in will no doubt plough through the whole bundle quite happily. **VS**

BRIAN ZENTZ 'Skufftones 1.0' (In-Tec)
The reputation of Carl Cox's In-Tech label grows stronger with each release. Here Bryan Zentz delivers four funked-up minimal techno workouts infused with the sort of carnival spirit that leaves tired techno-trance competitors way behind. Stand out of the four is Algebra, a well paced cut that's based around a cheeky little hook sampled from the melody of Fix - 'Flash'. **M**

POLE 'Rondell' (Kiff / PIAS)
Despite being Stefan Betke's first proper Pole release in over a year, there's surprisingly little you can say about 'Rondell' that hasn't already been applied to his pop 'n glitch German dubworks. Two mammoth slices of pressurised cyber-skanking that'll slow your mind down to the point where you'll forget it is switched on. **VS**

EMPIRE STATE 'Why Climb The Highest Mountain?' (Melodic)
More sublime, forward-looking, folksy electronica from the Melodic label. This time the Yorkshire imprint turns to the Athens, Georgia-based Empire State for this toweringly evocative EP. 'Why Climb...' opens with an unsettling voice-over coupled with atmospheric thunderclaps before drifting off into a blissful flute-soaked, downbeat meander. But don't get too comfortable as an unexpected turn into twisted, introspective territory occurs at around the halfway point, with scouring bass tones creating an altogether darker, more disturbing atmosphere. If you fancy a break from all the electric stuff, the flip even sees the trio return to more familiar guitar-driven pop, so there is something here for every mood. The best thing to come out of Hebden Bridge since the last Melodic release. **DS**

LA MOUCHE 'Super Strasse EP' (Memphis Industries)
It's not much of a secret that this is one of my very favourite labels, so I'll keep the sycophancy and over-the-top praise down to a minimum and just say that the 'Super Strasse EP' is just as good as I expected. Label boss Ollie Jacob, under his La Mouche guise, builds four jazzed-out, hip hop-influenced tracks that flit between the slightly unsettling and the utterly gorgeous. Opening with the evocative strains of 'Don't Fuck With The Program' and moving on to the folksy, acoustic guitar-enhanced beats of 'Paved With Stone' before flipping over to the psychedelic chords of 'Roads' and the title track's rhythmic, lo-fi instrumental wanderings, the 'Super Strasse EP' does all the wistful, introspective and cinematic things Memphis Industries is great at, and more. Essential. **DS**

OLIVER HO & JAMES RUSKIN 'Mutate and Survive' (Meta)
A dense, tribal and somewhat twisted affair delivered by two of London's premiere techno producers. Working from Ho's samples without previously hearing his final tracks, Blueprint's James Ruskin makes creative enough use of the digital ingredients, but it's the label boss's own pair of pneumatic compositions richly infused with warped vocal stabs that'll really cut the mustard in the clubs. A memorable marker point for Meta's progression into double figures.**VS**

INIGO KENNEDY & MARCO LENZI 'Molecular LG02' (Molecular)
Second offering in Molecular's locked groove series, not perhaps matching the tonal diversity of its predecessor, but a commendable set of cyclic tools from Inigo Kennedy and Eukatech's Marco Lenzi nonetheless. Sure to find suitable application in the tough techno environments. **SF**

>RECOMMENDED<
JEFF MILLS 'Lifelike EP' (Music Man)
Skimming the dancefloor cream from the recent album, this 4 tracker avoids the copied-to-death tribal formula; opting instead for sparse percussion, bubbling 303s and twitchy atmospherics - all tied together with undeniably Millsian strings. Only one of the tracks was previously available - the sublime 'Condor To Mallorca', but fans will remember the excellent 'Detached' from 'Liquid Rooms'. Elsewhere, 'Time After Space' showcases a suitably different sound with its unnerving delayed shuffle, and 'Black Avenger' stomps along in a reverse-edit frenzy. **NC**

>RECOMMENDED<
BERND FRIEDMANN 'Nonplace EP2' (Nonplace)
'Consuming vast quantities of jazz cigarettes adds a somewhat pleasurable angle to this EP' candidly states the press release for Nonplace EP2, Bernd Friedmann's fantastic Cologne-based dub imprint. And whilst a couple of skunk hot-knives would no doubt benefit the more impartial listener, this guitar-ridden bonanza of slothful electronic dub is so incredibly wigged-out you'd find it difficult not to get sucked in by its sultry sensory sensuality, whatever your weed intake. Oh, okay, pass the knives then. **VS**

>RECOMMENDED<
7-HURTZ 'Stoke's Motor' (Output)
Absurdly good electro that deserves to achieve classic status and no doubt will. Twisted as you fucking like, whilst at the same time exuding a warm and familiar funk that sucks you in with more power than a hundred Dysons, 7-Hurtz have here provided the perfect prelude to their much anticipated debut long-player 'Audiophilliac'. Let your brain take a ride in Stoke's Motor, but don't be surprised if it's a long time coming back. **SF**

JONH TEJADA & ARIAN LEVISTE '6 Hits of Sunshine' (Palette, California)
Interesting title, considering there are only four tracks (may be it means something to a Californian?) But when all four are of such corkers I'm not going to complain. Deep, deep tech house grooves combined with lovingly soft basslines, teasing hi-hats, perfectly timed chord changes and Balearic guitars (?) make this another in a growing line of wonderful releases to come from California (who said American techno was just Detroit, Chicago and New York!) **M**

>RECOMMENDED<
VELOCETTE 'RE EP' (Parallel, California)
Worth buying for the John Tejada track alone, this essential Californian 4-tracker offers a fine snapshot of the blistering quality emerging from the American West Coast. Tejada's 're-examination' of 'I feel' will satisfy most house and techno heads who like their tracks punchy, funky and very bass-heavy, whilst Velocette's dark contorted house groove is also outstanding, particularly in the middle when it breaks down into a sparse icy rhythm section. The flip side contains a trademark slice of dubtronica from San Fran's Kit Clayton, drenched up to its neck in lofty chords and warbling studio trickery. The meandering final inclusion 'Clockwork', presumably by Velocette, develops into some kind of electro death-pop that is very unhinged indeed and becomes even more so when you realise it was written in 1995. Dunno what it is yet, but they're obviously on something. **SF**

ADE FENTON 'Perverter' (Potential)
Eight release on Ben Long's respected Potential label, this time produced by Atomic Jam resident Ade Fenton. Both tracks start out with hi-hat-and-treble-heavy loops that gradually mutate into a deeper, more minimal percussive sound. The A-side is well paced, featuring flapping percussion with highly infectious hi-hat pattern changes over a simple hypnotic bassline. But to my mind it's pipped to the post by the B-side - an intense driver featuring heavy filter action, cut up loops and erratic beat switches, typical of Ade's DJing style. **M**

JEFF MILLS 'Circus EP' (Purposemaker)
It's ironical that here, Jeff Mills manages to do a poorer job of plagiarising himself than many of his imitators - churning out two tracks of previously used tribal loopery with a few extra squeaky noises, but minus the usual magic touch. Not appalling by any stretch - it'll work on the floor, but from the self acclaimed 'Purpose Maker' this just won't do. Calling it an EP is a bit of a piss-take too. **NC**

SIR REAL 'L.C.D. EP' (Round Records)
Each Round release fills me with delight, such is the non-run-of-the-mill[s] nature of Birmingham's wonderfully titled House of God-affiliated imprint. HOG resident Neil Sir Real cranks up the chaos for Round once more with 4 comic cuts of unpredictable, yet floor-friendly Brumbeat. 'Metal Works' sounds like death-metal from the Brighton School of Electronics, 'Stellar' pounds along in a tough techno groove, 'Minimama' rocks like Ozric Tentacles on Absenthe and as for Sherwen's electro mix of Voodoo Groove... Well, what do they say about the water in Birmingham? Music with big hairy bollocks. **VS**

TUBE JERK 'Blackout EP' (Sativae)
It's good to hear Tim Wright releasing tracks through Scotland's Sativae. The music is so well suited to the label, bringing a fun, yet warped kind of funk to an imprint which, whilst being consistently superb, has acquired a reputation for being, well, how can I put this? Dark n' fucked-up. The freakish and often hellishly groovy sound of Tube Jerk flits from jazz to electro to house to noise every ten seconds in 'Flicker and Out', whilst the ridiculously well-titled 'Blackout' is a really evil 4/4 beast which will probably greatly offend people who listen to nothing but garage. **VS**

>RECOMMENDED<
OLIVER HO 'Colours for the Blind' (Sequential)
Ho turns in a storming set of deep dancefloor disorientation for Oliver Way's new sequential imprint, ably assisted on remix duty by stateside don Damon Wild. 'Silver' cuts through the pack with its contorted backwards groove, whilst Wild's mix on the flip takes the futuristic essence of the track on board with a tough driving rebuild. An impeccable first release. **VS**

AUBREY 'Half Blues EP' (Solid Groove)
Aubrey's last Solid Groove EP 'Stressed Squares' was a stunning record, so I held out great hopes for this little number. Whilst not defective in any really noticeable way, the ideas present, and there's lots of 'em, don't seem to quite breath the same ingenuity. The phasing deep house groove of 'Looking Glass' is the only cut that will really seduce you, but seduce you it will. SF

BREAKNECK 'Chapter One EP' (TCR)
Second release from the Exeter-based breaks label that is quickly gaining attention from major DJs on the scene. Three mixes feature on this release, all utilising the atmospheric choral backing of the original to good effect. The first remix ups the tempo, samples and loops the rap and builds up to a massive bassline drop, whilst the more downtempo mix give a well-rounded appeal to the record. **B**

STEWART WALKER 'Mobilization' (Tektite)
This is the type of warm, lush techno that captures you with its sheer beauty and leaves you wondering how something so simple can be so unbelievable gorgeous. Four different versions, from the electric dub slant of the original, the atmospheric and sublime Sutekh mix to the Female mix which picks up the pace a little but keeps it deep and the Recept mix with it's meatier drums and subtle, sexy strings. The sort of record that you leave in that special little pile by the decks because you know it won't be long before you'll want to play it again (and again). **M**

>RECOMMENDED<
STERAC 'Untitled' (Tresor)
Amsterdam's eminent Steve Rachmad debuts on Tresor with a superb dark 4-tracker of Detroit-influenced floor tools. 'One With Hats' is particularly effective, driven by Rachmad's skilful production, a mighty twisted synth line and some rather splendid, er, hats. On the flip, culling a name gag from a release a few years back, 'No Hats Required' strips the same synth line down to a warbling metallic groove. I'm sure Tresor will be having him back again. **VS**

CHRISTIAN SMITH 'Mojito' (Tronic)
As well as the Original mix that builds and builds with layers of funkiness, Christian Smith has drafted in two of the best new wave techno producers to assist on remix duty. Ealing's Oliver Ho delivers a metallic mix of complex fractured loops and Samuel L. Sessions injects even more funk to produce a bass heavy tribal groove. It seems both can do no wrong at the moment, and the music sounds all the richer for it. **M**

THE AZTEC MYSTIC 'Revenge Of The Jaguar remixes' (UR)
This high-profile remix 12" rode across the Atlantic on the crest of a wave of controversy last month. Three reworked versions from Jeff Mills, Octave One and Mike Banks all stay very faithful to the original - the highlight being Banks' semi-beatless orchestral masterpiece. Octave One contribute an excellent reworking - twisting the melodic hook into a new structure and adding a hypnotising bassline, but sadly Mills' offering lacks the impact that one would hope from such a pairing. An excellent platter nonetheless. **NC**

THE UNKNOWN WRITER 'Condition Red' (UR)
UR 'operative' Marc Floyd delivers this latest instalment of highly-technological-funk, proving once again that he is capable of producing electro of the highest quality. All three tracks gallop across the turntables like a PCP Drexciya, and the mood is dark throughout - 'Cosmic Osmosis' with it's revving bassline, the echoed vocal of 'The Safety Is Off', and most troubling of all 'The Wobbler' - rest assured, there will be no 'tone by tone' remake. **NC**

USER 'User 006A' (User)
Rather tasty double-pack from the User school of sample theft and filtered groove, all except the A1 track which just seems to rip off a Sims loop off and crucify it rather badly. The B and C sides particularly make up for this blemish, with plenty of deep mutating grooves that work on different levels and exist to be manipulated through loud speakers. The process goes on. **VS**

>RECOMMENDED<
PUB 'Summer Pt1' (Vertical Form)
PUB 'Summer Pt2 - Arovane & Nick Mixes' (Vertical Form)
KIT CLAYTON 'Lateral Forces EP' (Vertical Form)
Atlas Records in Soho, London need little introduction to lovers of fine abstract audio. With two faultless first releases, enlisting the advanced tonal architecture of Nick Rapaccioli and Tresor resident, Pacou, their Vertical Form project looks set to further expand the broad parameters of experimental soundcraft. The third EP release, 'Summer Pt.1' by one of the founder members of the ultra low-key Glasgow-based 'Ampoule' collective, showcases a breathtaking 34 minutes of complex submarine-grooves and atmospheric studio research spread thickly over two gargantuan tracks. With San Francisco's ever-busy Kit Clayton bringing his fractured dub dynamics to VFORM005, one can rest assured this is a label run by thought, not compromise. There's so much groundbreaking electronica here that I can't scratch the surface with such little review space available. The bottom line being, go and purchase some Vertical Form records, take them home, and your life will feel much fuller for it. **SF**

PLAID 'Booc' (Warp)
With each release Plaid get better and better, here treating us to four outstanding tracks that luxuriously combine gentle organic piano and string scores with the lush electronic breakbeat soundscapes Plaid are renowned for. There isn't a single sound out of place, and all four tracks work equally well at 33rpm as they do at 45rpm (eight tracks for the price of four!) An EP that defies logic very well. **M**

ALBUMS

V/A 'Encounters' (Blueprint)
By putting this compilation together, James Ruskin documents the evolution of a label's sound which, whilst lying low for the past year or two, has proved a redefining influence for so many up-and-coming techno producers. Timeless classics like Outline's Blueprint 5 and last year's 'Prevention' from Ruskin sit alongside old and exclusive cuts from Oliver Ho, culminating in an overall listening experience that whilst not totally fluid is ear-friendly enough to meet the strict quality control for unmixed CD compilations of back-catalogue minimal techno. 'Encounters' will no doubt provoke further research from tech-heads that missed the initial wave of Blueprintmania a few years back, pulling together twelve choice cuts of rich, textured alien funk, rotating metallic rhythms and the irritation of a superb unreleased Ho mix which will probably never make it onto vinyl. A worthy cross-examination of a label whose best moments are assuredly still to come, eventually. **SF**

V/A 'Atomium 3003' (Bungalow)
If you were a fan of Bungalow's quirky Japanese club-pop compilation, 'Sushi 3003', then this will be right up your street. Working along the same lines but fixing it's gaze on the European scene, 'Atomium 3003' takes a look at quirky pop gems unearthed around our very own continent. With molecular morsels from the likes of Sweden's Eggstone and France's Bertrand Bergalat, by way of The Crooner's wonderful 'Over The Rainbow' and Le Mans' 'Zerbina', you are going to get your hands on a few rare beauties with this album. 'Atomium 3003' offers the chance to get in on the ground floor of a musical phenomenon that very few even know about yet and, in true Bungalow style, is a solid, well-constructed compilation, put together with love, care and attention to detail. **DS**

RILEY & CLAY 'Red Light Express' (Bush)
Bush continue not being tied to any one brand of techno with this, their fifth LP, coming from a Swedish Mr Richard Johansson who, for a reason not known, has decided to become two people. As Riley & Clay he delivers eight rather average tracks of deep house grooves making frequent reference to disco, techno and something else that you can't quite put your finger on. Red Light Express has taken two years to get from the studio to release, and seems to suffer as a result, lacking a freshness in parts and any kind of cutting edge feel. **M**

CYPRESS HILL 'Skull & Bones' (Columbia)
Cypress Hill start the new century much as they left the last one, with fiery raps and stoned meanderings on life. Pseudo gang-sterisms are much in use as before, yet whereas their previous effort showed definite signs of stagnation both lyrically and musically, the overall Cypress sound has certainly stepped forward with 'Skull and Bones'. Still on production duties, Muggs attempts to dramatise the overall content with violin breaks, whilst the sound also strays into guitar territory - nothing new in hip hop, but something that usually falls flat with the hip hop community (though suburban white skate kids seem to love it). I feel Muggs manages a successful genre marriage - hardcore hip hop is still at the fore, and the riffs are merely to compliment the breaks. 'What You Want for Me' is one of the standout tracks with no weed reference, instead showing anger about how they are treated in the industry by those jealous of what CH have achieved. And they still hate the cops too. **B**

DJ CAM 'Loa Project' (Columbia)
DJ Cam's fourth album presents another heady mix of down-tempo influences, incorporating R&B, ('You Do Something To Me', the only vocal cut on this piece), hip-hop ('Mental Invasion') and reggae/dance hall (laser and gunshot samples and dubby bass lines, a la 'Ganja Man' and 'DJ Cam Sound System').

The overall feel is very reminiscent of the Mo' Wax style of beatz and instrumental, jazzy hip hop - DJ Shadow, Nightmares on Wax, Attica Blues, etc. All tracks sit very well together as an album, creating a lazy, funked-up atmosphere that induces plenty of head nodding. If you've every enjoyed Cam's previous material, this should prove a highly effective slice of beat-driven chill-out muzak. **H**

SYRUP 'Different Flavours' (Compost)
Viscous, slightly electrified, disco-friendly, jazz-influenced floor fillers are what Syrup do and 'Different Flavours' does not disappoint. Driven by close-to-Chic bass guitar licks, wandering keys, subtly phased vocals and a certain Moroder/François Kervorkian style of production, this LP is a joy to the ears and a pleasure to the feet. Moving into house tempo on tracks such as the Bassline Members mix of 'Sweat Shop' and taking a turn into more fractured electronic territory on the OCB mix of 'Maple', this double album is never short of variety either. With its echoes of the past brought easily into the contemporary, 'Different Flavours' is a tasty treat for funk-fuelled dancefloors and sweet without being in any way cloying or sickly. **DS**

>RECOMMENDED<
BUSCEMI 'Our Girl in Havana' (Downsall Plastics)
Dirk Swartenbroekx follows up 1998's 'Mocha Supremo' with another richly blended album of jazz-influenced electronic fusion. 'Our Girl In Havana' takes its cue from a diverse range of influences but focuses on Latin rhythms and deep textural programming, adding up to a sophisticated lounge-style long-player that translates equally as well to the dancefloor. Shifting from drum'n'bass, through house and downbeat in tracks such as 'The Salon Section', 'First Flight To London' and 'Angel of LA', Buscemi never sticks to a tried-and-tested formula and there are many subtle surprises to be found on 'Our Girl In Havana'. Each track is accomplished and sensual, but the ones that really get the cigar are the divinely dreamy Astrud Gilberto-like 'Ramiro's Theme' and the exquisite cover of Belgian band Bernthöler's 'My Suitor'. Highly recommended. **DS**

MIRWAIS 'Production' (Epic)
He's Madonna's favourite producer and the latest big thing from France. You've heard the obvious comparisons with Daft Punk, Kojak, Cassius and the rest, but what is Mirwais really about? Well, on the strength of his debut album it's quite safe to say that heavily filtered, subtly twisted dance music with intelligence and integrity figures fairly high on the agenda. From the opening 'Disco Science to 'I Can't Wait, by way of 'Junkie's Prayer' and 'Definitive Beat', 'Production' shifts between mid-paced dubby electronica, up-tempo house and moments of inspiring experimentalism that bring a much-needed touch of soulful class to the Gallic sound. Vocoders and dirty phasing all play a key role in the album's gritty urban character but the driving orchestrations and deep beats of 'Never Young Again' are the stand-out moment of a cracking soon-to-cross over LP. Buy, beg, borrow or steal a copy but just make sure you get it soon. **DS**

ERSATZ AUDIO 'The Forgotten Sounds Of Tomorrow' (Ersatz Audio)
This exemplary sixteen-track compilation rounds up the first five years output of Detroit's Ersatz Audio label, home to Le Car, Adult, Artificial Material and more, plus various guests from time to time, such as Gerhard Potuznik, Kitbuilders and BMG from Ectomorph. Most everything here could accurately be described as electro, but a particularly pristine, shiny and thoroughly 'electronic' variant of electro with plenty of vocals (not just samples, real full-blown lyrics) which, set against the synth-heavy music, give this album a bizarre kind of Eighties feel. The tracks here may span five years, but there's a remarkable stability and consistency to this collection, which is both a tribute to Ersatz's rigorous artistic sensibilities and a guarantee that if funky, futuristic electro is your thing, then 'The Forgotten Sounds Of Tomorrow' are already here. **TMF**

V/A 'Techhouse Phenonmena 4' (Eukahouse)
The first of two compilations received recently at Overload HQ mixed by San Francisco-based producers. Red Melon Records take over the DJ booth for the fourth Eukahouse journey deep into tech-house territory, with Melon-man Dano using a selection of UK and US tracks to stir up an absorbing fruit cocktail whilst presenting the American label's vibe to boot. As it happens, the Melon sound does come across a tad 'fruity' at times (very sorry), which may deter those who like their house on the techno side of tech house. But moans aside, there are some very juicy moments that even full-on tech-heads will find very ap-peeling. Right, enough. Check the awsome tech-funk of Pure Science's 'Some of Dis' and the samba-driven filter frenzy of Dano & Joeski's 'Twisted Horns'. Good solid party music. **SF**

HARDFLOOR 'So What!?' (Harthouse)
In techno terms, Hardfloor have certainly earned enough points to collect their pension. To the point, unfortunately, where I didn't overly rush to put this newest long-player in the CD player. But, as with their last album ('All Targets Down' in 1998) 'So What!?' manages to keep the eject button at bay with what can only be described as incredibly well-produced feelgood techno with a forgivable sense of '90s nostalgia. 'Underexposed Above Average' sounds like a clean-shaven Neil Landstrumm track, whilst 'Spoken Token' is like a dirty clanking 'Mahogany Roots' with comedy electro-wasp noises panning from side to side. Probably not the last album we're gonna hear from Ramon Zenker and Oliver Bondzio, but then so what!? **SF**

>RECOMMENDED<
LACKLUSTER 'Container' (Focus)
In the wake of the influential (and damn-near classic) label Clear has arisen Focus. Whilst the essence of Clear converged very much around the revival of electro sounds and attitude, it seems from this first full-length release that the focus of Focus (sorry) will be centred on pure electronica mood music. Lackluster's sound is essence of mellowness; catchy melodic riffs under-pinned by lush waves of thick keyboard drones. Similar in style to Bola's "Soup" album on Skam last year, "Container" somehow manages to sound much more lively, with real funk breaks and less solipsistic melodies. Still, the lack of any abrasive elements make this perhaps the best chill-out/go-to-sleep album of the year so far. **PG**

>RECOMMENDED<
DJ GARTH 'The Cisco System' (Greyhound Recordings)
So much music adopts the dub blueprint of deep pulsating bass stabs and skanking stripped-down percussion, I seriously wonder from time to time whether the appeal will ever wear off. Well-mixed by San Francisco's DJ Garth, 'The Cisco System' showcases the deep house sound of the West Coast in true style, and whilst the influences are extremely dubby, they also happen to be funky, soulful, acidic and ever so slightly experimental. In a nutshell, this is one killer house compilation, featuring the kinds of track blends that make the mix sound different each time. The production on tracks like 'People' by Rocket is gobsmacking, as are the atmospherics on the majestic 'Twenty Minutes of Disco Glory' by DJ Garth and ETI, and although the selection won't be to everyone's taste, the whole package exudes undeniable quality from start to finish (and back to start again). The West Coast of America looks like a definite holiday destination this summer for anyone wanting some good music with their tan. **SF**

MUM 'Mum' (Klein)
Easssy music... ideal for those times when you want to listen to something without having to think about it too much. Mum produce what could probably be called Trip-Funk, or Jazz-Break or... hell, I could probably go on for days creating names for it; Easy-Beat-Mammal-Rock... Ok, so I can't. But forgetting genre types is hard to do when listening to this, because Mum never really step into the realm of true musical adventure. Sure, there are some cool beats and nifty production here, coupled with genuinely attractive use of melody at times, but I can't help think that this will only get played when a 'safe-bet' is the only option. **PG**

>RECOMMENDED<
SOFA SURFERS 'Cargo' (Klein)
Vienna's Sofa Surfers return to our attention after a quiet year or so with their second and rather more accomplished long-player. Brimming with all manner of beats n' breaks, both sequenced and played live, Cargo is very, very thoughtfully constructed piece of work. To quote their press release; 'No bubbling old skool synths, no fat Hammonds or brass section samples. Only when absolutely necessary would harmonies be accepted. But most of all, the freezing cold around them demanded bass, more and more bass.' Yeah, I can dig that. Throughout the album, disturbing tones and occasional chunks of feedback drop in and out at irregular yet perfectly timed intervals, adding an unpredictable edge to the dub and jazz-influenced breaks, whilst somehow having the gratifying effect of joining the whole album up into one fluid timeless wonder. Indeed, bits of this album could easily have been made twenty years either side of the millennial axis. Hard to pick out the best tracks because nearly all are outstanding and work immaculately in unison. Spend some time Sofa Surfing. Spend some time trapped in Cargo. **VS**

FUNKSTORUM 'Appetite for Disctruction' (K7!)
'Corniest Album Title of the Year' ?.. After a few listens, it seems to make sense. Funkstorum make music that seems to be

uncannily close to recent Autechre output, but with a sly grin on its face and a near blatant disregard for the genres that are mutated into the shocking hip-hop-broken-beat chaos that assaults your ears. The tracks combine rocking dancefloor beats with crackling, fragmented electronic blips, rappers find their rhymes blendered and merged with chattering blips, female vocals are processed to sound like an error message declaring its undying love, synths sound like they're only half-plugged in and the listener submits to the chaos, forgetting those familiar comparisons. **PG**

BEIGE 'I Don't Either' (Leaf)
A true delight from Tony Morley's Leaf imprint, courtesy of Cologne's creator of skeletal ultrafunk Oliver Braun. Brought to the label's door Stefan Betke (Pole), you immediately get the impression from the CD cover that Braun's music will, although lacking in drive, be something rather special. 'I Don't Either' is clearly in a world of it's own - further redefining minimal electronica in such a spacious way that the silence - the bit 'between' the bleeps - are the vital ingredients. Silence is a theory anyway, not a physical reality. **SF**

THE BLUNTED BOY WONDER 'Innuendo' (Music Man)
New York's Steve Stoll dons his Blunted Boy Wonder guise once more, breathing some pumping stateside minimalism into Belgium's much-revered Music Man label. Twelve immaculately well-produced groove tools, spread over three loud discs, mashing heavy hat action with directional basslines and an elaborate analogue presence. A2 - 'Buck Fifty' is probably the one really standout cut, a fine funky waltz showing Stoll back in true form. **M**

V/A 'Kozzmozz - Spread the K' (Music Man)
Kozzmozz is Belgium's premier techno event. Here in it's third instalment, residents, T-Quest and Kozz have picked eleven tracks to represent the Kozzmozz sound. With cuts from producers such as Ben Sims, Drexciya, Jay Denham and DJ Pierre, the compilation's strength lies in it's diversity. For me the most notable flavours are; the Detroit tinged electro of Synapse, Justin Berkovi's deep tech house cut, the heavy rolling bass of Gillespie's 'Turntablism' and David Carretta's funky house 'Cosmos 70.' Although few of the tracks featured are exclusive, it's certainly a worthy purchase that showcases quality global techno. **M**

STEVE BUG 'The Other Day' (Poker Flat)
'The Other Day' is the latest release on Steve Bug's own German label, a double comprising one electro tune and seven 'nice' and accessible tech-house tracks. The housier tracks are all clean and crisp with a light airy feel and strong production, yet the electro cut suffers from an excess of cheese and a lack of imagination. The tracks all get into their own groove but unfortunately end up stuck here, and as a result end up sounding rather ploddy at times. This guarantees a safe and cosy ride but one with no real twists, turns or surprises. **MH**

BOGDAN RACZNSKI 'Thinking of You' (Rephlex)
Sticking this in the CD player, I was hoping to get that pleasantly surprised Rephlex feeling and not the "Oh-shit-I've-spent-my-beer-money-on-THIS!?!" one. But being a newcomer to Bogdan's insane jungle rampages, I ended up with a smile all over my face. Basically, there are about 40 killer drum and bass breaks/riffs on this 40 minute album - all put through that clever WhatTheHellIsItGoingToDoNext box that seems a must for today's artier electronic musicians. And to spice things up Bogdan goes on some inspired rantings, employs a twisted brass section and throws in numerous helium-sucking kids to scream their affection. Totally off-it. **PG**

ENSEMBLE 'Sketch Proposals' (Rephlex)
A mix of blip 'n' bleep rhythm-scapes, droned-out melodies and sensitive, off-kilter vocals; despite the emotional similarities with Pram and Stereolab, Ensemble have a pretty unique take on modern Indie music. The three-part vocal harmonies that drive most of these songs sometimes clash in perverse 'getting there' off-key moments, giving the music that all-important lo-fi feel. But there is a depth of song-writing here, at times, that gently negates some of the more quirky tendencies. Still, I wouldn't recommend this to any but the most ardent ex-jangle fans (Sarah Records anyone?) or for twisted wierdness addicts seeking Sunday afternoon listening. There's plenty of potential in the more accessible moments though. **PG**

LIKE A TIM 'Red and Blue Boxing' (Rephlex)
Having always maintained considerable respect for Tim van Leijden's often obtuse music, this album - produced using nothing more than Korg's Electribe drum and synth units - immediately grabbed my attention. Having explored the totally twisted potential of Korg's shiny little units, I was looking forward to hearing how the esteemed Dutchman would utilise such a skeletal set-up. The ugly clanking carcophony that results is not only the worse advertisement that Korg could ever hate to have, but also a clear indication that the only possible reason for the existence of this album is, as is often the way with Rephlex, an excuse to rip the piss. If you buy this, and enjoy it, you need to get out more. **VS**

V/A 'Sci-Fi Level 3.3 Mixed and Compiled by Thomas Schumacher' (Superstition)
Here we see Germany's Thomas Schumacher delve deep in to his record box and select one of the most eclectic techno sets to feature on a mix CD of late. Sci-fi Level 3.3 is a fat swedge of hard jackin' Chicago techno, loop driven funkiness, smooth tech-house and even a hint of tech-pop. Combining varied, funky mixing, custom made vocal samples ('fills') and the balls to let a track play on it's own when needed, the result is a joy to listen to. Compared with mix albums that simply try to replicate an hour spent behind the decks at some club, this is a refreshing experience that kept me constantly grabbing at the CD sleeve to check who made each excellent unfamiliar track. Favourites are too many too mention, although particularly worth noting is Schumacher's wonderful yet-to-be-released remix of Phase 3's seminal 'Der Klang der Familie.' **M**

V/A 'The Torture Chamber - Mixed by Billy Nasty' (Tortured)
With twenty high quality releases from some of the biggest techno producers around, Billy Nasty showcases the sound of his ever-popular Tortured imprint with the first in what is looking to be a series of mix compilations. Extracting 17 favourites from his armoury, the Nasty one sets out on a smooth, energetic romp into loops 'n layers which accurately reflects both the direction of the label and it's boss's tight funky DJ style. Highlights are the funky 'Area' by VCP (Steve Rachmad) and the untitled A1 tracks from both Co-Habits and Shock System. **M**

JAMES RUSKIN 'Point 2' (Tresor)
James Ruskin Point 2 (Tresor)
Two years on from his debut long-player, James Ruskin returns on the mighty Tresor with a selection of tracks that demonstrate how he's maturing as a producer and continuing to progress beyond the creation of mere DJ tools. There's a greater variety of tempos and rhythms on display than we've previously seen from James: 'Version', 'Coda' and 'Subject' rage hard enough to blow a hole in reinforced concrete, but 'Connected', by contrast, wouldn't be out of place in a house club. Yet the standout is 'From Over The Edge', which is possessed of the grandest vision of all the tracks on 'Point 2' and hints at just what James might be capable of when he abandons the club format altogether. **TMF**

TERRENCE DIXON 'From the Far Future' (Tresor)
He may be one of Detroit's less well-known producers, but Dixon has previously co-produced Juan Atkins' 'Skynet', released 2 twelves on Metroplex and collaborated with Claude Young on his own Utensil imprint. As you would expect, this album is steeped in the tradition of true Detroit techno, embodying a truly rich, warm and organic sound. Dixon fuses lush, atmospheric strings with super-fast fizzing top-end percussion and bass heavy kicks. In addition to a raw punchy funk, the tracks have a sultry dreamlike ambience, possessing the classic feel of pure Detroit mood music. 'From the Far Future' it may be, but this double sounds like a drawing together of past, present and future. Timeless. **MH**

>RECOMMENDED<
V/A 'The Button Down Mind of Daniel Bell' (Tresor)
When it comes to minimalism, the likes of Hawtin, Mills and Hood are generally considered to be the innovators in the field. Yet whilst Dan Bell may not have released nearly so many records as his contemporaries, his early Accelerate releases like 'Blip' and 'Beat Freak' were vital in shaping the movement. In keeping with the theme of the Globus series, 'The Button Down Mind...' is a essentially a house mix and includes a plethora of cracking tracks from producers such as LoSoul, Thomas Brinkmann, Cari Lekebusch, Herbert and Maurizio, as well as two from Bell himself. With inch-perfect mixing and a spotless track selection, the flow is seamless throughout and finishes on a flourish with Shake's 'Detroit State Of Mind'. Highly recommended. **TMF**

POLE

WORDS> VALERIE SNAILS

Enter the dub dungeon of Pole. A heavily fractured sonic realm fabricated from defect analogue noise and sub-bass from subspace.

Hailing originally from Dusseldorf, 33-year old Stefan Betke is rapidly acquiring the kind of cult status that could only emerge as the result of some serious, serious experimenting with sound. Earning a distinguished reputation during his time at Berlin's legendary Dubplates & Mastering cutting rooms, Betke now continues his mastering and production work in studio space near his home whilst simultaneously DJing for both club and radio and running his own music publishing company, Betke Edition. Taking his Pole title from the Waldorf 4-Pole filter, the piece of equipment from which he creates irregular rhythms of frequency interference, Betke punches out a sticky splintered species of digital dub, transforming pin-sharp pops 'n crackles into the perfect abstract beat structures from which to hang bass.

The unmistakable Pole sound owes much to his working environment, a barely furnished studio set amid the industrial concrete bombsite of Kreuzberg, fifteen minutes from his home in Greater Berlin. Drawing tonal influence from the awe-inspiring Steve Reich, John Zorn and Fred Frith, Betke packs out venues wherever he goes, reputedly lending new meaning to the phrase 'making the earth move'.

His Scape imprint is fast becoming a prize show-ground for experimental sound design. Following the recent release of 'Just Landed' by Burnt Friedman and the Nu Dub Players, a filthy slab of contemporary dub featured in Overload #1, the label's sound moves quickly on to the next level with a compelling statement of intent from Betke and his whacked-out associates, 'Staedtizism'. This metaphor, recently developed from the Scape laboratories apparently deriving from 'Stadt' ('city'), is a title most befitting of the urban futurism that drips from the compilation.

Advanced listening.

~scape

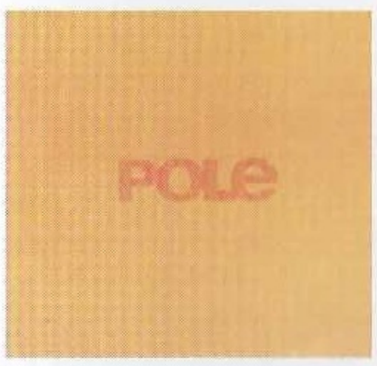
>RECOMMENDED<

V/A 'Staedtizism' (Scape)

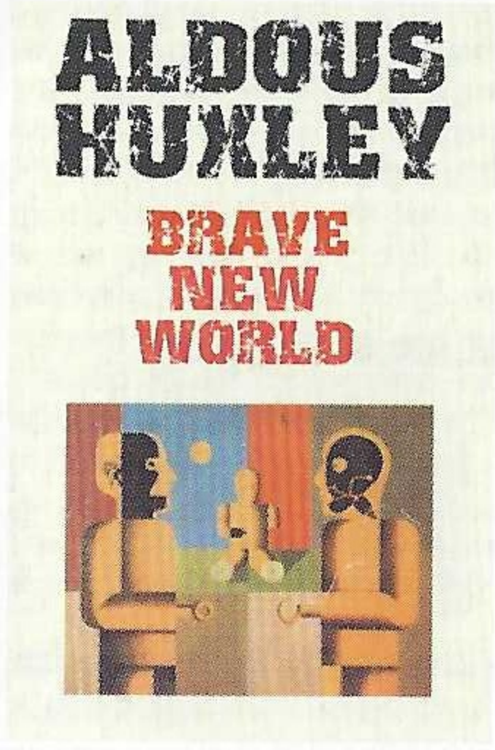
If you want to hear the most beautifully chilled dub-orientated electronic album of the year, go and buy 'Staedtizism'. Of course, being on Pole's uber-minimal Scape imprint means it won't appeal to everyone, which is assuredly their loss and not mine. This is dub music so brittle, so utterly broken, it feels as if bits are dropping off as you listen to it. Track 3, 'Echelon' by the legendary Sun Electric will have you think your ears are joking, believe me, try it. The whole album a loose pile of sub bass, skeletal-beats, clicks, pops, crackles, feedback and frequency, and, whilst lodged ever so slightly in the colon of its creator, will give a great, great deal of listening pleasure to anyone who appreciates the music of Thomas Felhmann, Bernd Freidmann, Kit Clayton, Pole and the like. Available only as a full album on CD, a limited edition twelve invites four of the best cuts onto vinyl, although the full ten are undoubtedly a much richer experience. Buy on sight. **VS**

>RECOMMENDED<

POLE '3' (Kiff / PIAS)



Anyone who was into either of Pole's first two albums is pretty much guaranteed to appreciate this one, as very little seems to have changed in the world of Berlin-based craftsman Stefan Betke. Yet Pole's sound is Pole's alone, so if no-one else is doing it, why the hell shouldn't he carry on as before? The blueprint is therefore essentially the same: the crackle, hiss and pop of surface noise, the fading, floating dub half-rhythms and the impeccable sense of detail. And, as before, it's the spaces between the sounds which really matter, creating an environment for the mind to wander through, a pocket of humanity deep inside the machines. **TMF**



>CONTEMP0RARY CLASSIC< 'Brave New World' by Aldous Huxley

Many would regard Brave New World as Huxley's most important novel. This may or may not be true, though it is undoubtedly his most popular. It is a novel subject to incredible commentary, and continues to receive both praise and condemnation in equal measures. As a work of science fiction originally published in 1931, it is a remarkable vision of a future we are in danger of becoming. Bursting at the seams with ideas, thoughts and theories, it examines the advancement of science and it's possible philosophical and ethical effect on human society. The dialogue is sharp. Wit and satire are used exuberantly throughout in a world where individuality is rewarded with exile.

Utopia is a standardisation of the human race. Development of embryo to child is measured in travel along a production line conveyor belt, thirty-three and a third centimetres per hour. Standardised and sanitised. Relentless psychological conditioning all but ensures a predetermined fate, a chosen caste, a programmed mindset, compartmentalised. Slavery by society. Romantic love is taboo, sexual promiscuity the norm and monogamy is a sickness. There is no family, everybody belongs to everybody else. Birth control, mandatory, is a safeguard from the horrors of pregnancy. Indeed, the very thought of being a parent induces a revulsion convulsion. Knowledge suppression is vital to harmony, to the continuing stability of the social order. No complaints, no difference known.

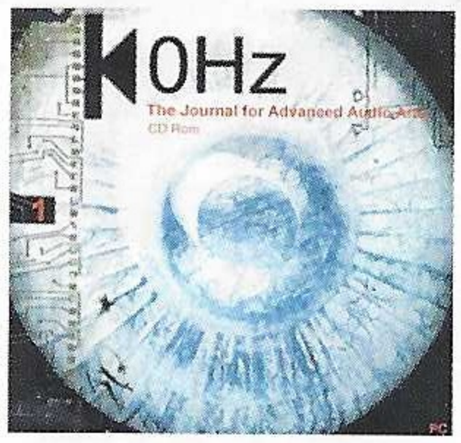
"Stability," said the controller, "stability. No civilization without social stability. No social stability without individual stability."

The story centres around three main characters. Bernard, the disillusioned Alpha-Plus, John, the savage brought to London from an Indian reservation in Mexico, and Lenina, the catalyst for disparity between love and physical sexuality. It explores conflicts within the individuals, and documents the misery and individual breakdown in the face of repression. Brave New World is a world without hope, without alternatives. Utopian ignorance, savage wilderness, or island exile. There are no happy endings. The ability to lead a free and simple life is impossible and the rejection of civilisation ends in suicidal despair.

This story heeds a warning against the dangers of scientific utopia. Thirties science fiction has become the reality of today, and many parallels simply ooze from the compelling dialogue. Genetic engineering and cloning is now old technology, drug administration to control mood and state of mind an everyday occurrence, and with the continuing help of NATO, eugenics and population control is rife throughout the third world. Despite those who offer literary criticism, Brave New World makes us realise how important it is to protect our rights to individuality, and as an individual, to retain our rights to individual freedom, something that is constantly and tirelessly being eroded away. A classic must read.

WORDS> low.life

'A Journal for Advanced Audio Arts' by OHz CD ROM (PC only)



'Ultra chromatic chord frames rising like rock walls from the black depths and immense stellar crystallizations radiating tonal perfumes through deep and black radiant space - they listened - and closed their eyes as the waves of sound poured over and through their being' [Host Productions]

Launched last June at SONAR, OHz is an information minefield of sonic, visual and mental interaction dedicated to the definition and exploration of contemporary sound culture. In short, an AV feast. Fundamentally, this CD ROM is the perfect platform to showcase output from some of the most explorative sound workers of the last twenty years, as it delves a deep furrow into the science of noise and interference, scrutinizing sound potential and the echoing artforms of sound and vibration.

The investigation of sound phenomenon is not a brief, simple affair. It will no doubt taste unpleasant to palates requiring the comic book reference facilities offered by today's off-the-shelf monthlies. OHz takes us on a scientific journey, sometimes disturbing, often profound, but always provoking a closer inspection into a world that technology has only just given us the tools to begin to understand. There is much here to learn, and small doses in combination with multiple forays will undoubtedly yield positive results.

0Hz oscillates across a great many topics. Disk drives hum frequently on demand for further information. Macrodynamics, heavy and deep, leads into possible new explanations of certain areas of brain function and a possible explanation for experiences such as telepathy and synchronicity - a difficult subject to get to grips with for sure, but then whoever said that sensory science was going to be easy? From the dark depths of flicker noise and sonic warfare, through the healing frequencies of cymatics, the information comes thick and fast. Entelechy (binaural beat frequencies used to entrain specific cortical rhythms - long used and proven effective by remote viewing operatives) leads onward towards the amazing sounding sound grid. This device consists of a laser matrix that detects and analyses the movement pattern of an inhabitant, and then reproduces it's analysis in sonic form.

The visuals throughout are spectacular, especially those within the T:un[k] pages, complimenting and expanding the accompanying audio files. Only those suffering from both blinding and muting afflictions will fail to enjoy it's content. The listening room is the sonic highlight of 0Hz. Twenty-five haunting audio snippets end all too soon.

As one would expect from such an innovative and ambitious project, OHz is not faultless. For instance, those delving into the journal using slower PCs may experience the occasional runtime difficulty. But ultimately this is a good quality production that deserves attention from all those who profess interest in audio arts. It presents an entertaining foundation into the culture of sound exploration and serves as both an appetite wetter, and a stepping-stone into further sonic research.

WORDS> low.life
FURTHER INFO> actionc@aol.com

DJ CHARTS

STEVE STOLL
PROPER NYC

1) DAMON WILD 'Subtractive Synthesis 5' (Synewave)
2) THOMAS CHROME 'Woodcarver's Nightmare' (Corb)
3) ADAM BEYER 'Drumcode 19' (Drumcode)
4) BASIC IMPLANT 'Audio 19' (Audio)
5) JOEY BELTRAM 'Arena' (STX)
6) HUSTLER 'Proper 34' (Proper)
7) UNKNOWN 'Conform 12' (Conform)
8) PUSHIN' 'Proper 35' (Proper)
9) UNKNOWN 'Stigma 4' (Stigma)
10) BLUNTED BOY WONDER 'Innuendo' (Music Man)

STEVE BICKNELL
LOST / COSMIC / CLUB TRACKS

1) T. HUNTER 'Mono 5' (White / Promo)
2) SPIRIT 'Spirit' (Lost Recordings 5 / Cosmic)
3) MIST 'Like Tears in Rain' (Cosmic)
4) S.B PROJECT 'Unconscious Behaviour' (Club Tracks)
5) JEFF MILLS 'Memory' (Tomorrow)
6) V/A 'Out Takes' (Surface)
7) SURGEON 'La Real' (Counterbalance)
8) PHASE 'Module Overload' (Lost Recordings 6 / Cosmic)
9) HO & RUSKIN 'Mutate to Survive' (Meta)
10) BEN SIMS 'The Dubs' (Hardgroove)

STEVE RACHMAD
STERAC / HOLLAND

1) ROBERT HOOD 'Technatural EP' (M-Plant)
2) HEIKO LAUX 'Sense Fiction' (Kanzleramt)
3) SIMULANT 'Access Future Audio (mix)' (Scopex)
4) GEORGE BENSON 'El Barrio (MAW mix)' (GRP)
5) G. FLAME & MR G. 'Untitled' (White / Promo)
6) POLE 'Rondell Eins / Zwei' (Kiff)
7) AROVANE 'Afol Scrap' (Din)
8) PACOU 'State of Mind' (Tresor)
9) SECRET CINEMA 'Rebounce (dub)' (EC)
10) JOEL MULL 'Imagination' (Inside)

LITTLE STEVE
ROB & STEVE, SMOKESCREEN

1) HYSTERIA (Test)
2) SOUL VISION 'Come Into My Room' (Deep Vision)
3) INLAND KNIGHTS 'Drop 12' (Drop White Label)
4) ONIONZ & TONY 'Slightly Touched EP' (Moody)
5) LE MOBILIER (Rinocerose)
6) BOMAC 'Groovy Electromix' (Missive - Test)
7) LOW KEY 'Delusional' (Life)
8) JOHNNY FIASCO 'Clicktrax Vol.1' (Afterhours)
9) MIGUEL MIGS 'Future Flight' (Large)
10) RASOUL 'A Lil' Sumthin' Sumthin' EP' (Panhandle)

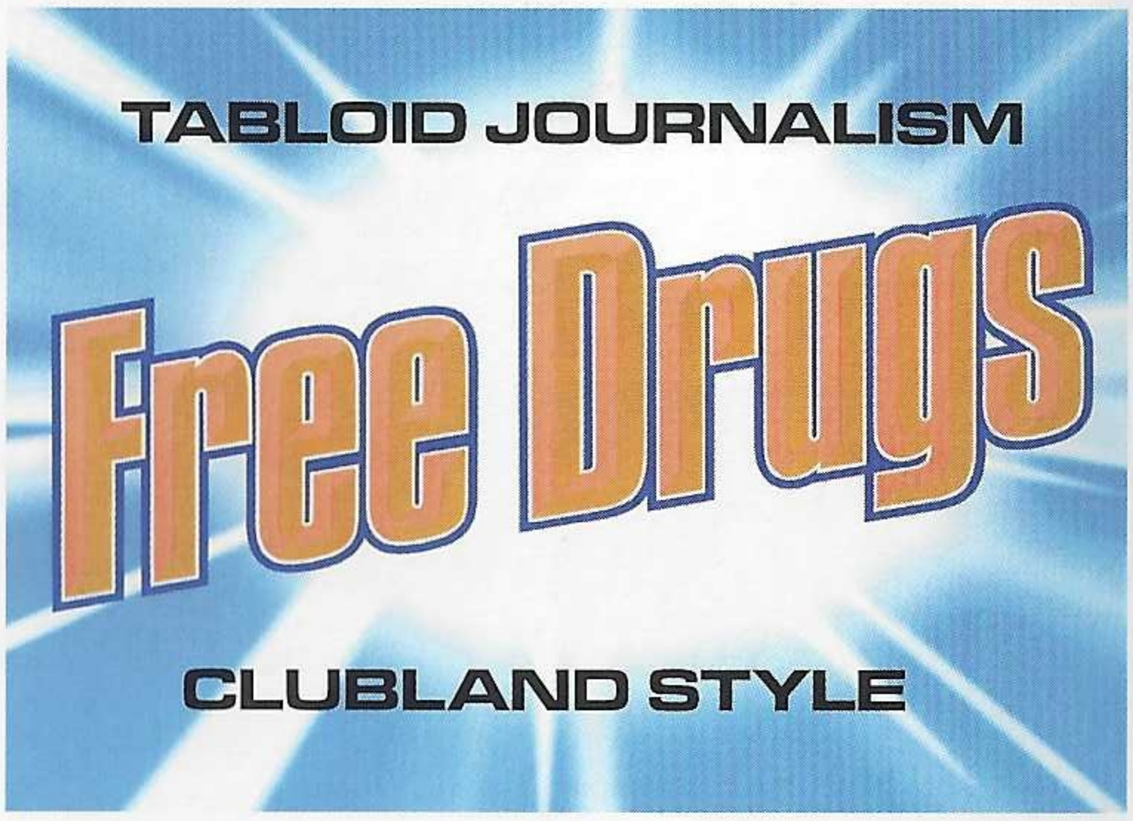
STEVE SHIELS
VOODOO, LIVERPOOL UK

1) STEVE STOLL 'Pieces of Eight' (Music Man)
2) JAMES RUSKIN 'Point 2' (Tresor)
3) U7 (White Label)
4) JEFF MILLS 'Lifelike EP' (Music Man)
5) SUMNER / SIMS (Infrastructure / Symbolism Split EP)
6) USER 'User 7' (User)
7) JEAN VANESSE 'Esitation' (Sabam)
8) SECRET CINEMA 'Volt' (EC)
9) SCORP (White Label)
10) NICO AWTSVENTIN 'The Prototextures EP' (Tronic)

STEVE BUG
POKER FLAT / RISING HIGH

1) OPEN 'Pirate's Life' (Seasons)
2) DJ RASOUL 'The Hump' (Silver)
3) SOUNDHACK 'Vol. 2' (Soundhack)
4) EGO EXPRESS 'Here Comes The Night' (Ladomat)
5) KLETTERMAX 'Bruchsticks 2' (Bruchsticks)
6) LAURENT GARNIER 'Man With The Red Face' (F.Comm)
7) THE DISCOWBOYS 'At Midnight' (Dessous)
8) SILICON SOUL 'Right On For The Darkness' (Soma)
9) MARTINI BROS. 'Tanzen' (Poker Flat)
10) GREEN KEEPER & ATJAZZ 'Parts Manager' (Static)

Next issue...
Chris



Last month's Ministry magazine stooped to unacceptable new lows. For those unaware, the front cover bore a brightly coloured picture of four pills embossed with the Dove emblem and the words 'Free Drugs' emblazoned in huge letters (as used on their promotional flyer shown above). The cover also contains the words 'Can YOU live without them?' and a mini Ministry Of Sound logo.

The big name music monthlies have long been using the issues of drugs to sell their magazines. Muzik Magazine, for example, run an award for someone with the fairly dubious distinction of being 'Caner of the Year.' Yes, the more drugs you can take, the more respect we will have for you - in fact, we will even give you a PRIZE for it. Mixmag have previously run stories such as 'Mitsubishis have saved clubland' and 'What do drugs do to you?' These kind of articles barely worthy of the word 'journalism'. It doesn't say much for the music that the magazines are covering if they need to lead their editorial with drug surveys and "reviews". Indeed, for many of these magazines the two are so closely intertwined it becomes unclear which is more important. This propagates the notion that without the drugs there would be no music 'scene', and therefore no magazine.

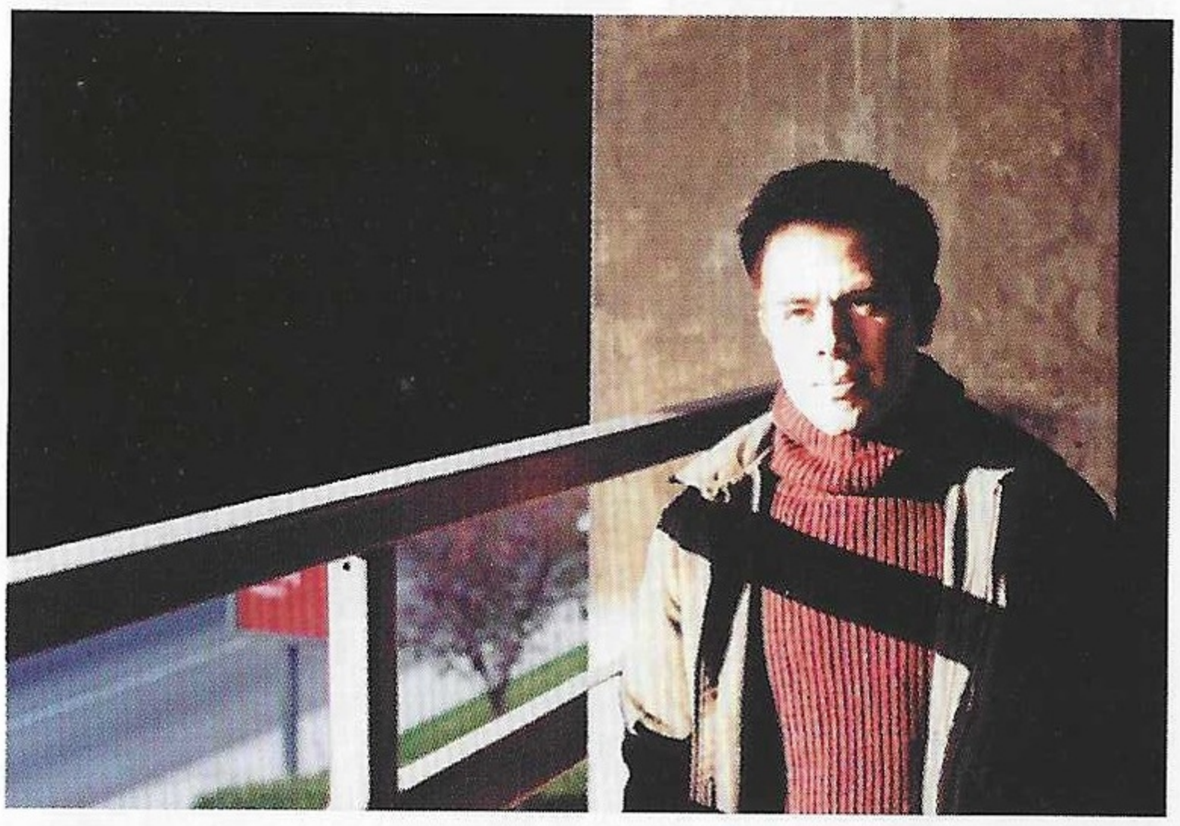
In the editor's letter inside the front cover of Ministry, Scott Manson writes 'Without condoning or condemning ... we give you the facts.' However within ten pages the following appears under a column entitled 'The Dog's Bollocks': 'Ferrari pills - trippy as fuck but all the more fun for it. Move over Mitsi there's a flashier new pill on the block. Feel the acceleration.' This reads suspiciously like a recommendation to me. In Ministry one page out of a 25 page spread is dedicated to the downside and possible dangers associated with drug use.

It is true that throughout the last four decades music, clubs and drugs have been associated with one another. However it is only recently that drugs have been so prominent at the commercial end of club culture and the acceptance of this is highly dubious. In Ministry magazine Stephen Armstrong says Multinational Companies are queuing up to sponsor clubs despite knowing that 'drugs are key to clubbing'. He accuses sponsors of turning a blind eye to drug use, (in essence condoning), because there is such big money to be made from club culture. This is exactly what Ministry is doing; they are more culpable though as they are glamourising drugs and telling their readers that they are as much (if not more) a part of clubs as the music is. This irresponsible sensationalism is out of desperation to boost readership figures as they are aware that this kind of garbage sells units to kids who don't know any better. Let's face facts - we all know that music sounds better on drugs. Shit music can become bearable, and good music can sound like its been remixed by Jesus. But when manipulative bullshit journalism allows white tablets to become cover stars, it's surely a black day for the music press.

WORDS> MILES HAWTHORNE

OFF THE BEATEN

CYTRAX



With exciting audio-works from artists such as John Tejada and Kit Clayton frequently streaming their way across the Atlantic, the West Coast of America is becoming something of a focal point for forward-looking underground electronic music. Unbeknown to much of the world's music press, California's CYTRAX label has been nurturing the area's burgeoning scene since 1996, releasing a steady flow of top quality minimal and experimental techno by some of the region's finest exponents of abstract groove manipulation.

Those present at the label's conception were Marcus Miller, Tang (whose first EP was released on Cytrax in April) and DJ Jasper (John Mendez - pictured above). Marcus soon moved to San Francisco to take work on with another label, subsequently encouraging the Cytrax team to relocate to the area where they met Joshua Kit Clayton. Clayton, who is fast gaining a reputation for his incredible output on a host of European labels, gave them some music that was exactly what they were looking for. As Marcus and Tang became busy with other endeavours, Kit and Jasper were left to carry on with the development of Cytrax. "We now live about six hours from each other" explains Jasper. "We meet once a month to schedule things."

I ask Jasper what influences have shaped the label's music? "Speaking for myself" he replies, "I would have to say Basic Channel, M, early Chain Reaction, G-Man, Downwards, My Bloody Valentine, Axis, Marcel Duchamp, Kit Clayton and Juan Atkins. They have either made me feel or think about things in a totally new light." Having recently spawned its thirteenth release, Cytrax is now beginning to find footing with tech-heads and lovers of experimentalism worldwide. For a label with such an innovative take on the modern techno formula, it seems surprising that, despite receiving press in a few European publications, the label still remains relatively unheard of in Western circles. Each EP so far has presented an intelligent audio balance that provides a welcome contrast to the European predilection for bangin' 4-track DJ tools and formulaic predictability. Walking the rewarding line between club cuts and home listening, Cytrax has developed an audio blueprint quite unlike any other. Washes of atmospheric noise ride like wind over sullen vibrations, rattling textures and spacious minimal drum patterns, whilst uber-minimal dubscapes pulsate alongside haunting ambience and tonal clanking. At the tender age of 22, Jasper's own production style breeds constant intrigue, forging a bassdrum-heavy path of crisp, clicky percussion, sumptuous reverse edits and ever-morphing complex compositioning. Kit Clayton's fuzzled crackling electrostatik and bassy subterranean rhythms step up the label's standing as one of the lesser-known leaders of future groove experiments. The first Cytrax EP even included one of John Tejada's first techno tracks, although the label's launch was rather marred by misfortune. "We had very little luck with this release due to a horrid pressing" sighs Jasper. "At the time not one of us had dealt with vinyl pressing plants. Most of the plants here focus on rock music, so they had no idea that techno records needed to be pressed loud." So, did many people pick up on the first release despite the poor finish? "No, considering that most of the copies are sitting in my garage" Jasper replies, 'but I have run into a couple of people that actually have copies."

Delay, the Cytrax offshoot (currently on its third release) was started in order to focus on a more DJ-friendly type of production, using different producers to construct and deconstruct tracks in a more club-orientated manner. The second Delay release featured a reconstruction by leading London producer Oliver Ho. I asked Jasper how this came about. "I heard a rumour that he was in LA and playing at some Internet show, so I drove up to meet him. I introduced myself and asked if he wanted to grab a bite to eat. The following evening we met up and had a very good chat about techno and things of the like - I gave him a copy of Delay #1 to see if he would be interested in doing a reconstruction. A few weeks later he got back in touch to tell me everything was sorted out. Oliver is a really interesting and genuine person, so it made things really easy since I had never dealt with anyone on that level."

Although Jasper proclaims support for both labels in both cities, he admits it's all pretty low-key. "We throw the occasional Delay party at small venues" he continues, "Southern California is lacking in the techno club department, but there are massive raves that usually host big name techno DJs. Northern California has a bit more support from the smaller club-type venues." Elsewhere in the world, their music has proved to be particularly popular in Germany. "It's quite hard to gauge the level of global support as we don't always get the smaller music magazines over here in the States" explains Jasper. "Kit is frequently over in Europe due to his commitments to Pole's Scape imprint. I went along last summer for a mini tour, mostly in Germany. Kit and I did most of the DJing, with Sutekh and Safety Scissors mainly playing live."

Running a label that strives to be different from the established norm can be quite an arduous undertaking. So, what one thing has Jasper learnt since starting Cytrax. "Patience and dedication pay off in sometimes small but amazing ways" he smiles. Sure does.

'State of the Art' by Tangtron is out now on Cytrax, followed by EPs from Phono, Kit Clayton and Safety Scissors. Delay 004 will feature Jasper deconstructed by Tang, Delay 005 will feature Sutekh and Safety Scissors. A full-length LP from Jasper is also expected later this summer.

WORDS> ALEX WARD

cytrax DELAY

Basic Tonal Rethink

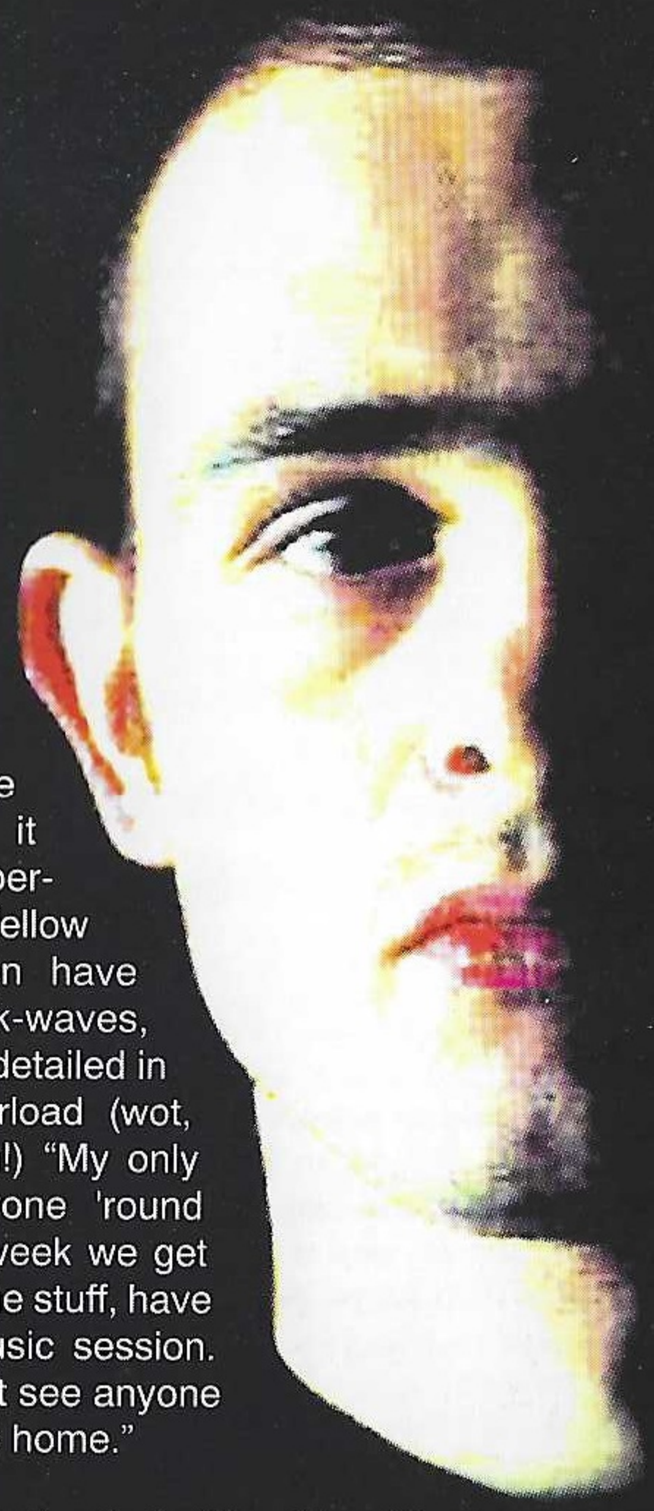
MICK HARRIS

There is a grouping of ex-rock terrorists who, whilst largely ignored by the media and left out of musical fashions, have remained perhaps England's finest and longest-running creators of truly astonishing electronic music. Robert Hampson (Loop), Kevin Martin (God), Justin Broadrick (Godflesh) and MICK HARRIS (Napalm Death) have all gone on to produce some of the most forward-thinking, consistent and fuck-with-your-head music of the last 10 years. And like Hampson's Main and Chasm projects, or Martin and Broadrick's Techno-Animal, Mick Harris under the names Scorn, Hednod, Lull and Quoit, has been creating a soundtrack to the nervous, isolated emotions that modern life seems to propagate.

Starting off as Scorn with the grind/dub fusion of 'Vae Solis', Mick along with bassist and vocalist Nick Bullen (also an original member of Napalm Death) went on to create 'Colussus', an impossibly eerie masterpiece of dream-like music that defied categorisation. Their third album 'Evanescence' sparkled, fusing hip-hop rhythms with gliding synths and samples to create a disorientating mix of funked-out solipsistic grooves. Nick Bullen left soon after and Mick decided to drive the original impetus for Scorn into new domain. After setting up his Birmingham based studio he locked himself into a routine of beats and bass exploration: "Evanescence is a great record. I enjoyed it to a point but had enough of going to studios by the end of recording and the ways of other engineers, thinking it's self-indulgent crap. I can't put up with that, so it was time to get it going for ourselves. Evanescence has a polished sound to it, with nice chords on the guitar, so it all pieced together but I had to move on and wanted to work more with concentrating on the beat and bass line…and it's still that way now, I still like the cyclic beats and bass." You can't really help but think of drums when you think of Mick. He made his name in noize-core circles playing in Napalm Death and with John-Zorn and Bill Laswell as Painkiller. So it's little surprise that it still all begins with the beats: "I always start with the beat, always. My beats are either broken-up re-sampled breaks or single hits played into a beat…then broken up some more. I've taken stuff from my kit and other kits and hits from all other sources."

Working alone as Scorn, Mick has fused the captivating, dark nature of isolationist music with a raw, gothic bottom-end heavy elaboration of Hip-Hop. Whilst still giving it all for Napalm Death he was drawing inspiration from Brian Eno's 'Apollo' and later the booming atmospherics of Thomas Koner's 'Nunatak Gongamur': "Nunatak reminded me of Eno's darker works. I liked the idea of the low, low frequencies; how they touched you. You could say it was a new form of extreme when I heard it." The fusion of heavy-environment ambience with breaks has defined the new dark-sound that permeates across Jungle, Hip-hop, Techno and more recently Garage. Mick checks Danny Breaks, Dillinja and the new scary-skool rap of Company Flow and Dialated People; and they're similar pioneers in the exploration of true deep 'n' dark funky shit.

With such consistency in his solo work, it could be easy to overlook Mick's collaboration work. Fairly notoriously as Painkiller and more recently with Tony Child (Surgeon), amongst others, the former whirlwind skin-basher has helped to make some of the best music that can only be described as 'People Jamming Who Know What They're Doing'. Still, he takes a down-to-earth view of the process. "It's all been fun and mind-battering at the same time but you learn each time, don't you? I'm just more careful about it all now-a-days, too many head-aches make you say 'well…' Some good stuff came out of it, Not all of it though." The recent experiments conducted with fellow Birminghamer Surgeon have already caused shock-waves, as the techno overlord detailed in the last issue of Overload (wot, you didn't get it?…doh!) "My only real contact with anyone 'round here is Tony. Once a week we get together to listen to some stuff, have a chat and have a music session. Good lad is Tony. I don't see anyone else really… studio and home."



Mick has a bit of a reputation for locking himself away in his lab, something that helps sustain the emotions and imagery that his music presents. He agrees that his music is personal. Industry considerations don't play a part in his ideas: "I'm not thinking about a certain way of writing so stuff can fit in a DJ's bag, that doesn't come into it at all. I'm not trying to make tunes that can be played out in any way what so ever. I make the music to please myself. I have fun making the stuff, for sure and it's good to be told that someone has enjoyed something but I'm not making this thinking of anything other than me really. Ok, collaborations are different…"

It's perhaps an unfortunate stereotype of artists like Robert Hampson, Thomas Koner and Mick that because they keep a low-profile, spending the majority of their working time in the studio and rarely engage in the whole self-promotional side of music, they are essentially living the 'isolationist' genre tagged to some of their music. Still you'd think that with the global reach of his music and the names he's worked with he has a huge range of contacts? "I've had some great remarks from people from all over. Some really nice stuff said, met some cool people through it over the years, so the communication is there, I don't hide away all the time."

Still, best not to interfere too much with the man's time, eh? So, last question and especially for the noise-headz: Ever get the urge to just pound your drums at 300mph now-a-days? "It's fun. It was fun. Come on, Napalm Death back its day was a fucking mental doss. I'm telling you…full-on blast, we had a great time. It just came to the end for me, end of story."

WORDS> PAUL GANNAWAY

Forthcoming Releases:
Scorn "Imaginaria Award" e.p. on Antzen (Germany): 4 new tracks in June to be followed by an album. A collaboration work with Mark Speybey (DVOA) for Hush-hush. Quoit "The Mongoose" 12" for Collision Substance (USA). Quoit vs. Submerged 12" on Collision Substance (out now). Harris vs. Smerdon 12" on Collision Substance.

JURY FURY

WORDS>DAVE STELFOX

A high gust licks at the tarpaulin windbreak as we sit down, nursing hot cups of coffee in cold hands. "I love things like this, about being here," says Ian Simmonds, gesturing to Brighton's derelict West Pier. "I can sit here for hours just looking at it. There are these big starling roosts in there and sometimes they all come flying out. They look like huge black clouds, its amazing to watch." This image is easy to picture and holds something of the dark, brooding character of Ian's latest album, JURYMAN'S 'The Hill' on Crammed Discs/SSR.

In fact, 34-year-old Ian's personality reflects his music perfectly. He is open, honest and expressive but also a little vague and slightly mysterious, leaving certain thoughts hanging in the air throughout our conversation, making the apparently simple seem somehow enigmatic. "Yeah, spiritually speaking I feel a bit more alive here than I did when I was living in London," he reveals of his new West Coast home. "It got to the point where I needed more studio space and couldn't really afford to do it in London, so I spent a few weekends down here and found a nice place in Hove. I really liked it and moved in just before Christmas, basically to do this new album I'm working on as Ian Simmonds for Stud!o K7. It's three-quarters done and when my lease comes up in June I'll pick up and move on . . . I'm a bit of a gypsy like that. Moving around has never bothered me because, with my family, I spent the first 12 years of my life travelling. My father was a trumpeter and did a lot of touring so I've lived in America, Australia and Europe and all over Britain too. But living in London was just getting too much for me, the phone was ringing every five minutes, I wasn't getting any work done and I just needed a change of pace. Coming here was the best thing I've ever done. I've got a family of my own now and my daughter, Hannah who's six now, loves it here when she comes to visit me," he laughs.

As contemporary as Ian's work is, there is something classical and almost orchestral about the jazz-soaked atmosphere he wrenches out of cold, hard circuitry. This comes from painstaking attention to detail and a diverse musical background, including seminal jazzers such as Miles Davis and John Coltrane, punk rock and contemporary pop. He is a big fan of TLC and Mary J Blige yet also cites Stravinsky as a big influence. However, external factors like environment, films and life itself appear to be his biggest influence. "'The Hill' was the last thing I did in London and it was recorded just near London Bridge around Christmas 1998. The album's inspired by the area I was living in at the time called Dog Kennel Hill near Camberwell and all the things I could see from my window on a day-to-day basis - just little life stories. On the top of the flats where I used to live, you could see for 25 miles across London on a sunny day," he recalls. "There's also a link with the Sean Connery film called 'The Hill' too. It's the darkest thing I've ever seen and shows every single human trait, for better or worse. The narrative feel of the album could come from either of those ideas, but working with people like Roger Robinson who is a poet from Trinidad and Alison Goldfrapp gave it something else. Alison improvised all her vocals on the album which gave the tracks a real mysterious, ghostly, stream-of-consciousness feel. They're the moments you can't beat - when something really works."

His circumstances in the early 1990s have also left a lasting impression on Ian as an artist, most notably his time spent in Acid Jazz band The Sandals. "Being in a band was never really anything I envisaged that I wanted to do and I fell into it really. But it worked at the time and it's definitely informed what I do now because it was such a big experience. We were working together at the time of the acid house thing, but we were doing something a bit different. We were basically an art collective doing poetry evenings and things. We started making music in '91/'92 which just came from a few little things we were doing live at clubs like Tongue Kung Fu which we also ran. Within six months it had become a full-time thing with a major record deal, an album, months on the road and so on - and that's not a really healthy lifestyle. I won't go too deep into it but it got pretty hellish. Then the second album was shelved for some reason. My daughter had just been born and I didn't have a pot to piss in. It was doing my head in so I just decided to walk away from the whole thing and start doing things on my own and that's when the shift into working as an electronic artist happened. I took all the experiences I had, contacts and all that and set up my production company, All That's Left and went from there. I ended up doing an EP for Ninja but the first deal I signed was with Crammed Discs for the Juryman album which was co-written with Luke Gordon from Spacer. The second album is this one."

While Ian is happy in Brighton, he still finds the lack of funding and support for the arts in 21st-century Britain an important issue, saying: "Music is an art form, I mean I do see myself as an artist, first and foremost, and for some reason my music seems to be accepted better in Europe than it ever has been in Britain from a record label point of view. That's why both of the labels I record on are European. I spent years knocking on labels' doors with my music in this country and it didn't really work. Things like the funding for arts in France and Germany, it's second to none and that has a big impact on people creatively. Here, it just doesn't exist any more." The frivolous, sub-sixth form mentality of some sections of the music press is also damningly judged: "Being intelligent is quite often scorned here by the music press and they are the very people who should be supporting creativity. There was a review of 'The Hill' in NME a while ago comparing the picture of me to a frog. Little digs like that, they're not necessary and it's got nothing to do with the music. What I'm doing, it's not exactly high-profile music. It's not necessarily for the dancefloor, as that's not what I'm fuelled by, it's actually quite subtle so I'd rather talk to people who are genuinely interested and who understand what I'm trying to do."

Any cinematic aspect to Ian's work, it turns out, is more than a passing coincidence as the artist has recently diversified into film production. "I've set up another company doing films with two guys, one called Adam Smith from Vegetable Vision and another called Sam Pattinson. We've just finished our first documentary which is a living history film about a group of guys who re-enact the Vietnam war in the Kent countryside. Now that's really interesting and it took a whole year's filming. Hopefully we're going to be going to Cuba in September to do anther documentary on Cuban hip-hop too," he says, enthusiastically. "Funny, I see music in quite similar terms. It's all about emotions and images, like little sound paintings in a way. Music's the ultimate passion in my life but it's true that sometimes the thing you love the most can kill you, so it's good not to put all your eggs in one basket. After all, as I've learned, you can lose everything like that."

"I actually find making music very difficult to tell the truth. People say that anyone in my position is really lucky, and yes I am, but it's not done without a lot of sacrifices along the way. But, yeah, I am very fortunate in the long run and as long as I can pay the bills and keep clothes on my daughter's back, then I'm happy to keep on doing all these different things," Ian continues, gazing out once again at the decaying grandeur of the pier. "It's all about leaving a legacy of good work that I'm proud of in whatever field really. I've never done anything easy in my life and I don't see the point in doing something if it's not going to challenge you. I suppose if I'd lived an easier, softer kind of existence then it would be different, but until that happens there are always going to be these emotions and feelings to work through in my music."

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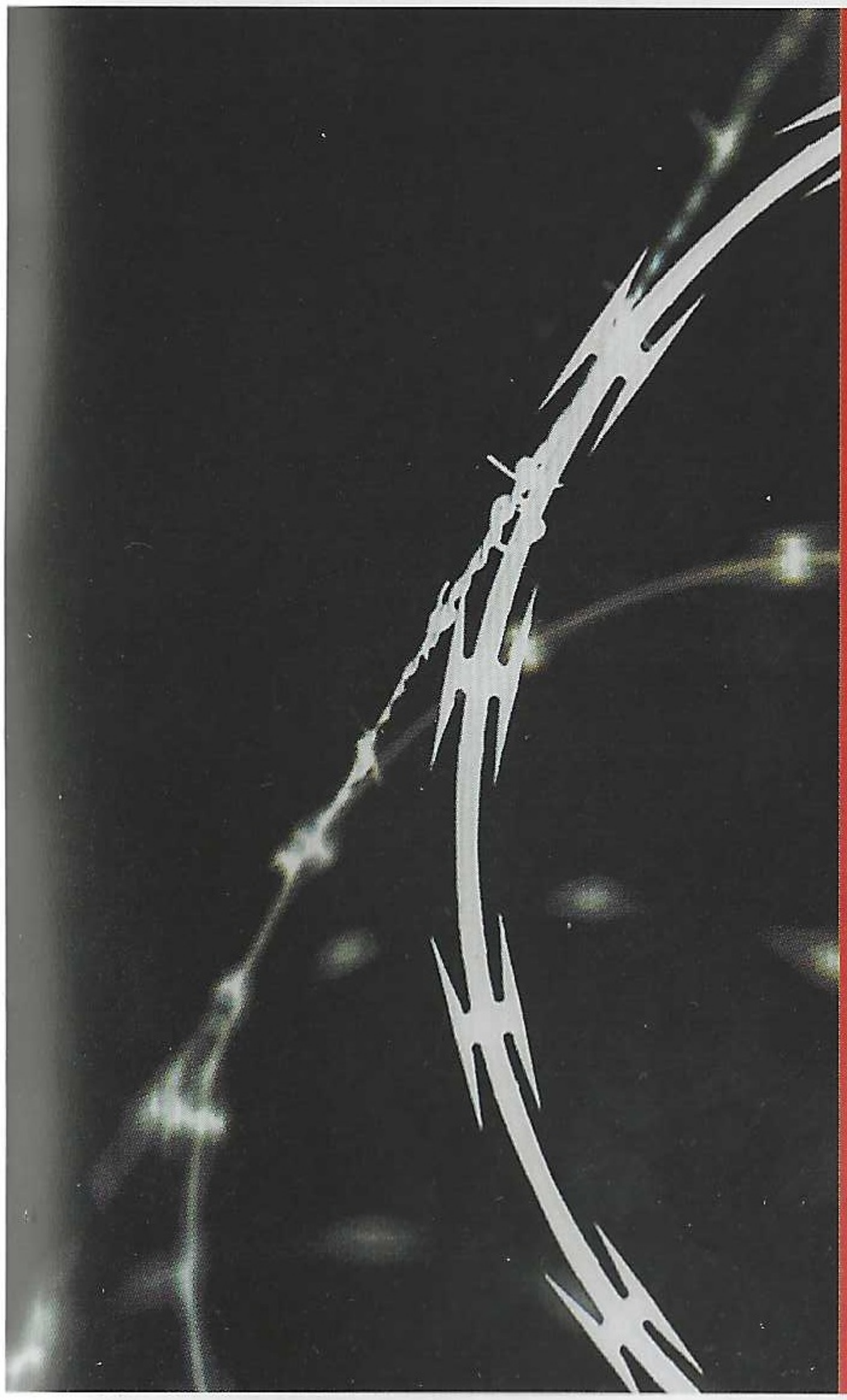

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